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CHINA IN DECAY

THE EMPEROR KWANGSU.

(*Drawn from life by a Chinese artist.*)

CHINA IN DECAY

A HANDBOOK TO THE

FAR EASTERN QUESTION

BY

ALEXIS KRAUSSE

WITH

SIX MAPS AND TWENTY-ONE ILLUSTRATIONS

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PREFACE.

The object of the present volume is to serve as a handbook to the Far Eastern Question, which has of late come so prominently to the front. It does not aim at competing with the numerous and more comprehensive works which deal with the physical, ethnographical, and political aspects of the Celestial Empire, but has been written with a view to supplying, in narrative form, a complete record of the various causes which have led up to the existing position in the Far East. It has occurred to me that a book explaining the aims of the different Powers interested in China, and detailing sufficient of the history of that country to enable the reader to appreciate the true significance of the tangled diplomatic relations now attracting so much attention, may serve a useful purpose in bringing certain facts, not usually appreciated, within the public ken.

The first three chapters, dealing with the country, the people, and the government, are mainly introductory. They have been included with a view to enable

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the reader who has not had occasion to make himself acquainted with things Chinese, to appreciate the bearing of the political situations dealt with in the body of the book.

Throughout the chapters devoted to the History of Political China, I have refrained as far as possible from comment, preferring to let facts speak for themselves. In the two concluding chapters I have approached my subject from the standpoint of the Englishman who believes that British influence carries with it a benefit quite apart from a mere increase of trade or accession of prestige. I hold that the existence of relations between strange and misgoverned countries and our own, tends to educate the people and to instil into them a desire for knowledge, a craving for progress, and an appreciation of morality, which they could not obtain in any other way, and that in China, more than elsewhere, we have a mission to perform, due, as much to the claim of duty as to that of self-interest.

The absence of an alphabet in the Chinese language, and the consequent lack of any system of spelled sound, renders the writing of place-names a matter of individual opinion. As no two authorities are agreed on this important subject, I do not offer any apology for having spelled the names which figure in the book in accordance with the nearest approach to their true pronunciation of which an Englishman is capable.

I have to thank Messrs F. M. Wood and T. W. Goodall of the China Inland Mission, and the Rev. J. D. Mullins of the Church Missionary Society, for the loan of several of the photographs which illustrate the following pages.

The detailed account of the Yang-tse Valley which forms a part of Chapter XI., has appeared in the *Pall Mall Gazette*. The portion of Chapter XII. describing the first railway in China, was originally published in *Black and White*; and some of the concluding passages of Chapter VI. dealing with the British Record, are extracted from an article contributed by me to the *Fortnightly Review*. I am under an obligation to the editors of these for permission to reproduce them here. The rest of this volume is new, and has been specially written at the request of the publishers.

ALEXIS KRAUSSE.

October 1898.

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SOME CHINESE TYPES.

CHINA IN DECAY.

CHAPTER I.

THE COUNTRY.

China, the oldest country in the world, boasting, as it does, a civilisation which dates from before the Abrahamic era, stands to-day an anomaly among nations, an entity built up of contradictions. Resulting from the systematic evolution of a series of ideas which are foreign to the appreciation of the Western mind, the rationalism of the Chinese intelligence runs counter to all the known systems of modern philosophy. As a human entity the Celestial stands alone: a creature without a fellow. His abilities are above the average, and his intelligence is acute, but his individuality belongs to an order of its own, and his aims are undirected by any train of thought to which we are accustomed. The Chinaman unites in his attributes a marked ability, a respect for the law and a love of peace, with an utter lack of honesty, truth, or affection; while his regard for learning and his appreciation of the Arts are accompanied by a fatalism without religion,

and an exclusiveness tempered only by the love of gain.

As with individuals, so with the nation at large. China, the fourth largest country in the world, is an Empire only in name. The numerous provinces and dependencies which go to build up the region nominally beneath the rule of the "Son of Heaven" are but a series of federated kingdoms ruled with despotic sway by viceroys or governors, and, despite the fact that many portions of the country are more densely populated than any other part of the world, and that China proper is teeming with agricultural and with mineral wealth, the "Empire" is in a constant state of poverty, and its people often in a condition of absolute starvation. It is nearly four hundred years since Europe first came into contact with Cathay. And yet the knowledge which has been obtained as to the rationale of its inhabitants is infinitesimal. The country has been tentatively explored, yet remains unknown; and to-day, while China has emerged by force of circumstances from its retirement in the farthest east, and has become the cynosure of all countries as the area of future exploitations and the coming market of the world, we remain in ignorance of the land and the people, and vainly conjecture as to the circumstances of each. Our knowledge of China, such as it is, is due to the efforts of a few missionaries and daring enthusiasts. The country has never been satisfactorily surveyed, nor have its resources been explored. The interior is to-day a sealed book, except in the case of a few chosen places, where the foreigner, unasked and unwanted, is tolerated

—and that with every mark of disapproval—under the sanction of a series of treaties obtained at the cannon's mouth.

And while we remain in ignorance of the realities of this remarkable land, we find ourselves imperceptibly drawn into fierce competition with other nations over the allotment of rights which do not exist, and the partition of territory which is unknown. After being kept waiting on the fringe of China for three hundred years, we find ourselves confronted by the action of rival powers, which promptly take measures for achieving in as many days that in which we have failed, and fearing to be bereft of the little we have secured, the British Government is driven to join in the scramble, in the hope of securing a share of the good things going. And so the eyes of Englishmen have been turned towards the Celestial Empire, which has become the focus of the political question of the hour, and one is, at the very outset, struck by the fact that our knowledge of the subject involved is so slight as to render an intelligent appreciation of the merits of the position no easy matter.

China, with its dependencies, occupies nearly a third of the Asiatic Continent. Nominally one vast kingdom, the territories comprised have the cohesion of neither race, nor constitution, nor religion. The people of Manchuria are the opposites of those of Tibet, nor is there aught in common between the men of Hunan and those of Kansu. In accordance with the paradoxical principle which underlies most things Chinese, the Empire is itself a dependency of a subject state, since

the Emperor is a descendant of the Manchu insurgents who conquered the eighteen provinces of China proper in 1644.* To give a general idea, the land may be spoken of as a vast slope stretching from the table-lands of Tibet and the Koko Nor to the Pacific Ocean. In the territory comprised in this far-reaching expanse, which covers an area of 4,218,401 square miles, there is to be found every description of physical feature and climate, from the snow-clad mountains of Yunnan to the alluvial plains of the maritime provinces, and from the tropical region of Kwangtung to the temperate margin of the Gulf of Pechili.

The most noteworthy characteristic of China proper is the remarkable system of rivers, which provides a ready means of communication in nearly every direction; and it is a curious instance of the want of logic inherent in the Chinese mind, that these natural highways are so rarely utilised as boundaries of the different districts into which the country is divided.

The eighteen provinces comprised in the kingdom of China, known also as the "Flowery Land" and the "Middle State," may be conveniently divided into four divisions. On the north are Kansu, Shensi, Shansi, and Chili. Inland, forming central China, are Sechuan, Hupeh, Honan, Anwei, Kweichau, Hunan, and Kiangsi. On the southern border are Yunnan and Kwangsi, and on the east are the maritime provinces Shantung, Kiangsu, Chekiang, Fukien, and Kwangtung. The smallest of these, Fukien, is rather bigger than

* The Chinese Empire comprises (1) China proper, consisting of eighteen provinces, (2) Manchuria, (3) Mongolia, (4) Tibet, (5) Turkistan, (6) Jungaria.

Ireland; and the most extensive, Sechuan, is nearly half as large again as the British Isles. In its physical aspect, China proper may be divided into two spheres. On the north and east sides the land is generally level and productive. On the west and south it is much cut up by mountain ranges, some of them of great

NATIVE JUNKS AT FUCHOW.

height, bare, and precipitous. The mountainous districts are rich in mineral deposits, and teem with natural produce, while the low-lying lands comprise a soil so fertile as to produce in many districts three crops in the year.

The rivers of China are of the utmost importance to the Empire, inasmuch as they afford what is practically the only means of communication between the different

territories. Roads are few and bad, the highway consisting, in most instances, of the merest track, and in the alluvial lands and those districts in which the loess beds* are situated, the paths are often knee-deep in mud. The great rivers, however, with their numerous tributaries and canals, traverse the Empire in every direction, and afford a cheap and ready means of transport, which has rendered the vast trade of the country possible. The rivers of China are known by a variety of names, each one receiving various appellations in different portions of its course. The word river is represented by two distinct terms: those in the north being called Ho, and those in the south Kiang or Chiang. Thus Hoang Ho signifies Hoang River, and the Yang-tse Kiang, Yang-tse River, facts which serve to exhibit the ignorance of persons who refer to the Yang-tse Kiang River, and thus show that they are unaware of the signification of the words they use.

The most important of the rivers of China are the Yang-tse, the Hoang, the Si, the Pei, and the Min. The Yang-tse Kiang ranks third in size among the rivers of the world. It rises in the table-land of Tibet, and, after a tortuous course, enters China near Batang, whence it traverses the provinces of Sechuan, Yunnan, Hupeh, Anwei, and Kiangsu. Its total course covers more than 4000 miles, and it is navigable by large vessels for more than 1000 miles from its estuary. The Yang-tse Kiang receives a

* The loess is a form of tertiary deposit, in appearance a brown, porous earth, easily pulverised, which covers the ground to an immense depth in the north-west of China. This earth possesses a fertility which is practically inexhaustible.

number of tributaries, of which the Kia-ling and Han are the most important. It also affords communication with two lakes of considerable extent. The most remarkable feature in connection with the Yang-tse is the extraordinary variation in its level, which alternates as much as 100 feet in the higher reaches, where the banks narrow, and confine the stream within a series of remarkable gorges, and 50 feet at Hankow, where the river is more than a mile wide. These phenomena are due to the summer melting of the snows on the Tibetan plateau, where the river takes its rise at a height of more than 15,000 feet, and the water rushes down in a flood, which at times submerges the country over a breadth of 20 miles. The same extremes are to be noted in the other rivers which rise on the great table-land, known as the "roof of the world," especially in the case of the Hoang Ho or Yellow River, which has long since earned for itself the title of "China's Sorrow." This river, rising in close proximity to the Yang-tse, takes a more northerly course, and after skirting the Mongolian plateau, passes through the great plain of China and enters the sea in the Gulf of Pechili. It has a course of nearly 3000 miles, and is quite unnavigable, except over a portion of its lower reaches, and, even here, vessels are hindered from ascending the stream by shoals and other difficulties. This river is peculiarly subject to floods, which submerge whole provinces, and it has more than once entirely changed its course, which is to-day some 300 miles north of the bed it occupied in 1854. The last occasion in which the Hoang Ho escaped its banks was in 1887, when, owing to an embankment

giving way, whole towns and villages were destroyed, hundreds of thousands of people were drowned, and several millions rendered destitute. A great plain, half as large as Scotland, and densely populated, was suddenly, without warning, turned into a raging sea. The Governor of Honan, the province most affected, stated, in his official announcement of the visitation :—"Nearly all the people have been drowned in the districts reached by the water,"* and the Peking correspondent of *The Times* placed the number drowned at not less than a million. The final estimate issued, with official sanction, and generally accepted, gives 1,600,000 as the number of people swept away ; 5,000,000 as being rendered destitute.

The Si Kiang or West River, which rises in Yunnan, is navigable for big steamers over a course of 350 miles above Canton, and is rapidly becoming one of the most important trade routes in South China. The Pei Ho, known also as the Peking River, is navigable as far as Tung Chow, 140 miles from the sea, and is the main route between the northern capital and the rest of the Empire. The Min Kiang is a much smaller river than the above-named, but ranks high as a trade route, being the approach to the important city of Fuchow, and the centre of the southern tea trade of China. In addition to these waterways, there are two others, which, like the Hoang and the Yang-tse, rise in Tibet, and flow through a portion of South-Western China. They are the Salween and the Mekawng. Neither is navigable within the Chinese frontier. The former, after crossing the

* *Peking Gazette*, 28th October 1887.

Chinese frontier at Kunlon, flows through Burma, until it empties itself into the Bay of Bengal, while the latter passes by Kiang Hung into Siam, and serves as the boundary between that country and French Indo China, until it reaches Cambodia, and loses itself in the China Sea.

The most important adjunct to the rivers named was the Grand Canal, an undertaking completed more than six hundred years ago by the Emperor Chitsou, and intended to place Peking in communication with Hangchau and Canton. This undertaking, which, in daring, ranks second only to the Great Wall, runs its course from Tientsin to Chinkiang, and thence to Hangchau, crossing on its way both the Hoang Ho and the Yangtse Kiang. The total distance traversed is rather over 600 miles. This wonderful engineering feat has, of late years, been suffered to fall into a very bad state of repair, and, partly owing to the change in the course of the Yellow River, partly on account of the improvement effected in steam communication by sea, the canal is used only by small junks, which are, with infinite labour, and in the face of many difficulties, propelled or hauled along its course.

Closely allied to the question of internal waterways is that of seaports, and in this respect the coasts of China are exceptionally well equipped. The whole seaboard from north to south is indented by a succession of deep bays and land-locked harbours, unsurpassed in the security they afford to shipping, and the facilities they provide for the loading and unloading of merchandise. Commencing in the Liao-tong peninsula,

the southernmost province of Manchuria, we have the remarkable harbours of Talienwan and Port Arthur. Just round the southernmost point of this promontory, known from its shape as the "Regent's Sword," is the shelter afforded by Port Adams and Society Bay. Across the gulf, one hundred miles away, is the roadstead of Chifu and the bay of Wei Hai Wei, while beyond the projecting cape of Shantung are the inclosed harbours of Ting-tse and Kiao Chou. Passing the estuary of the Yang-tse, and the Woosung River, with its port of Shanghai, we reach Nimrod Sound, the approach to Ningpo hard by Sanmoon Bay, which is in itself a harbour capable of sheltering the navies of the world. From this point to the southern border of the Empire the coast line teems with creeks and bays of the first class. Bullock Harbour, Namkuan Harbour, the Samsah inlet, and the entrance to the Min River are all especially favoured; and the harbours of Hinghua, Amoy, Tung San, Swatow, Mirs-bay, Bocca Tigris, Sui-tung, and Pakhoi are among the finest shelters for shipping in the world.

The roads of China are, as already stated, the worst in existence. When paved, they consist of blocks of stone imbedded loosely in the surface of the ground. The stones are frequently abstracted by the people for their own use, and in the hilly districts the tracks are utterly neglected, and never, under any circumstances, repaired. There are in different directions certain well-known caravan routes, which are largely patronised by traders, and, in a sense, may be regarded as public highways. Among the most im-

portant of these is the great caravan route from Peking, across the Gobi Desert to Urga and Kiakhta. There are also tracks from Peking to Shan Hai Kuan on the Manchurian frontier; to Paoting and the rich Shansi province; and the central Asiatic caravan route *via* Sigan in the great loess country. Apart from these, the trade of China is, with few exceptions, conducted by means of the waterways.

The most important of the dependencies of the Chinese Empire is Manchuria, a country about three times the size of Great Britain, and containing a population estimated at twenty-two millions. The people are mostly Chinese, the Manchus, who entered China in the 17th century, having become absorbed in the race they conquered, while the country they formerly owned has become repopulated by Chinese immigrants, with a sprinkling of Mongols and Koreans. The country is extremely mountainous, except on the north-west, where the ranges of hills give way to a series of plains which merge into the Mongolian desert. It is covered in many parts with dense forests, and cut up by a large number of fine rivers, mostly connected with the Amur, which separates the northern provinces of Manchuria from Siberia.

Mongolia, a vast territory, which comprises one and a quarter million square miles of territory, mostly desert, on the northern borders of China proper, is an unproductive region, peopled by about two million nomads, of indolent habits and low intelligence.

Tibet, the most mountainous country in the world, with an average altitude of fifteen thousand feet, com-

prises nearly a million square miles of hill and valley, interspersed with table-lands, which are mostly covered with snow. Its population is estimated at six millions, among whom are nearly one hundred thousand *lamas* or priests, who are supported by the Government. Tibet is the head centre of Buddhism, and the Dalai-lama, who resides at Lhassa, is the high priest of the cult. Besides the mountains, the most notable feature of Tibet is the large number of important rivers which rise within its borders. Among the more notable of these are the Indus, Sutlej, and Brahmapootra on the west, and the Yang-tse, Salween, and Mekawng on the east. Though the country is nominally ruled by the Emperor of China, it is questionable whether the Peking Government exercises more than a nominal sway over Tibet, which has only admitted the suzerainty of the Chinese since 1648. Intercourse with the eighteen provinces is maintained by caravans, the route between Lhassa and Peking being by Sigan, Lanchau, and Sining, and the journey occupies four months. Tibet is probably the least known country in the world. The interior is rigorously closed to foreigners, and the information available respecting the capital is of the vaguest.

Chinese Turkestan, a large and little-known territory, situated on the extreme west of the Chinese Empire, and wedged between Mongolia and Tibet, consists largely of desert. Owing to the great distance which separates the dependency from Peking, communication is slow, and the governmental influence weak.

Jungaria, the last and smallest of the outlying Chinese

provinces, is practically an appanage of Turkestan, which it closely resembles. It comprises the district of Ili or Kuldja, so long a bone of contention with Russia, and was the scene of the Mahommedan rising of 1871. It covers an area of less than 150,000 square miles, with a population of approximately half a million.*

The bonds by which these dependencies are united to China proper are of the slightest. They are the last of a number of States which at one time acknowledged the suzerainty of the Chinese throne, but to-day have become the vassals of other powers. The modern history of China is indeed but a record of the loss of empire. On every side the Celestial Kingdom has been mulcted in territory; and in addition to being bereft of regions which were once her own, and which rendered tribute to her treasury, she finds herself surrounded by Western powers exerting an unwelcome but increasing influence over the government of what remains. I shall have a good deal more to say on this subject further on. For the present, I revert to my initial subject-matter, with a view to placing the reader in possession of a sufficiently comprehensive account of the main landmarks in the China of to-day.

* The following recapitulation of the area and population of the Chinese Empire may be of utility to the reader.

	Eng. sq. miles.	Population.
China proper, . . .	1,336,800	386,000,000
Manchuria, ...	362,300	7,500,000
Mongolia, ...	1,288,000	2,000,000
Tibet, ...	651,500	6,000,000
Turkestan, ...	431,800	600,000
Jungaria, ...	147,900	600,000
	4,218,300	402,700,000

As might be expected in the case of a country so ill provided with roads as is China, the places at which foreigners have come into communication with the natives are for the most part situated either on the coast line or on the banks of the great rivers. In order that the reader may the better appreciate the events to be dealt with further on, I append a few brief references to the more important of the cities, which play a part in the political evolution of China.

At different periods in her history, China has known three capitals in different portions of her Empire. For upwards of a thousand years, the seat of Government was at Sigan, in the fertile Wei valley, which crosses the province of Shensi. In the year 420 A.D., the imperial residence was transferred to Kienkang on the Yang-tse, which thenceforth became known as Nanking, the southern capital, and there, within one of the largest cities of the Empire, surrounded by strong walls, the court was held for more than eight centuries. In 1260, the Mongol Emperor Chitsou, better known as Kublai Khan, removed from the southern capital, and chose as his resting-place the city of Cambaluc, which came to be re-named Peking or northern capital. The city stands in the middle of an extensive plain, 12 miles north-west of Tung Chow on the Pei Ho, and 160 miles from the Gulf of Pechili. It is reached by a road from Tung Chow, the town which marks the limit of the navigation on the Pei Ho. It is surrounded by walls 50 feet high and 60 wide, and entered through strong gates, all of which are closed at night. The city consists of three divisions: the

Chinese city, the Tartar city, and the "Purple Forbidden city" sacred to the Emperor and his immediate retinue. The latter is strictly guarded, and is rarely entered by any under the rank of first mandarin or viceroy. The Chinese and Tartar cities are very large, and, like all the other towns in the Empire, very dirty. The population is estimated at about a million. The streets are fairly typical, being gaily decorated but filthy to a degree, and the condition of the streets, owing to an utter lack of either drains or supervision, is such as to disgust the visitor, and prevent his going out except in a closed chair. The most striking feature of Peking is the dust which permeates every quarter, and finds its way through every interstice. Despite the unpleasantness of this nuisance, it is said to serve a useful purpose in acting as a disinfectant, an important desideratum mid such surroundings as those to be found in the Chinese capital.

The most important cities in the north of China, after Peking, are Tientsin, Paoting, Tai Yuen, Sigan, Tsinan, and Chifu. In central China, inland, are Chengtu, Nanchang, Changsha, and Talifu; and on the Yangtse Kiang, Chungking, Ichang, Shaszi, Hankow with Wuchang, Nanking, Chinkiang, Shanghai, Hangchau, Ningpo, and Fuchow. In the south are Yunnan, Nanning, Wuchau, Canton, Amoy, and Swatow. Of these, Peking and Nanking, the two capitals, possess an interest which is mainly historical. Of the commercial centres the chief are Shanghai, Hankow, and Tientsin, being the main trade centres of south, central, and north China, respectively. Hongkong,

which is British territory, and totally free from Chinese interference, is in reality the great forwarding centre for the foreign trade of China, and it is from Victoria, the capital, that the markets throughout the length and breadth of the land are supplied.

It remains to speak of the produce of the country. As will have been gathered from the foregoing, China is well supplied both with agricultural and with mineral wealth. Foremost among the articles for which the Empire has long been famous, are tea, silk, wax, cotton, and rice, and these are produced in various parts of the empire. The production of tea, though declining alike in quantity and quality, is yet considerable, and the culture of the plant and its preparation find occupation for the people in half-a-dozen provinces. The best growths are produced in the western and southern provinces, bordering on the Yang-tse. The finest black tea comes from Hupeh and Hunan, a second quality hailing from Fukien, while the choicest green tea is grown in Chekiang and Anwei. Both kinds of plant prove prolific in the climate of Sechuan and Kwangtung. A considerable proportion of the leaf produced is utilised in the preparation of brick tea, which is largely exported to Mongolia and Tibet, where it is highly appreciated on account of its portability and keeping qualities. Within the limits of the Empire, tea is practically the national drink. It is not taken, as with us, at special meals, but is used as a beverage, and kept available and ready for use at all times and in every household, excepting only the very poorest.

Next in importance to tea is the production of silk,

which owes its origin to Chinese ingenuity. It is on record that the care of the silkworm and the art of spinning and weaving were known to the Chinese as early as two thousand years B.C. The spinning of the silk has always been regarded as women's work, and the occupation has been followed by the wives and daughters of the people, from the earliest times. The mulberry is cultivated throughout the breadth and length of the land, and every one of the eighteen provinces produces its quota of cocoons. The silk which comes from Sechuan is, however, regarded as being the finest in texture and quality, and this commands the highest price in the market. In recent years, the old time methods of spinning and weaving by hand have been improved on by the introduction of *filatures*, which have been established at several of the treaty ports, and which will be referred to at length in a future chapter. The ease with which cotton and hemp can be grown in the alluvial lands has always encouraged the manufacture of fabrics suited to the peculiarities of the native cotton. The Chinese cloths are, however, inferior to the machine-made article, which is gradually beating them out of the field. The culture of the opium poppy has, notwithstanding the denunciation of the traffic by the government, long been largely indulged in, and the production of the drug has, during recent years, considerably increased. Tobacco, at first grown in Manchuria, has gradually found its way into China proper, and is now cultivated in many districts. Sugar is grown with considerable success in the south-east.

The mineral deposits of the country have not yet been thoroughly prospected ; but, judged by the reports of experts who have had opportunities of surveying the surface, the land is the most richly mineralised in the world. The absence of suitable communications, and the objection of the people to having the interior of the country visited by foreigners, have hitherto stood in the way of any satisfactory opening up of the subterranean wealth which undoubtedly exists, and the first promise of a change in the condition of things is to be noted in the granting of the Shansi and Honan concessions, which have been so recently notified. Coalfields abound in Chili, Shansi, Honan, Shantung, Hunan, and Yunnan. These fields cover a large extent of country, and the quality of the coal discovered is excellent. The deposits in Shansi are declared by the greatest living expert to be the most extensive in existence, covering many thousand square miles, and containing sufficient fuel to supply the world with all the coal it needs for thousands of years.*

Nor is coal the only, or indeed the principal, mineral deposit in China. Iron is found as freely as is coal, the two being frequently found in juxtaposition. Lead, tin, and mercury are produced in paying quantities, and copper abounds in Hupeh, Hunan, and Shantung. Gold is worked in Manchuria, and it is known to exist in the southern provinces, while traces of silver have also been noted. Salt workings are numerous

* Ferdinand von Richthofen : *China Ergebnisse eigener Reisen und darauf gegründeter studien.*

throughout the loess beds, and supply a valuable contribution to the revenue.

It will thus be seen that China, despite the shortcomings of its people, is an extremely rich country, and one well worth the trouble of exploitation. Unfortunately, its record has, so far at least, been very far below its possibilities, and it remains to-day an oyster closed against the efforts of the foreigner.

CHAPTER II.

THE PEOPLE.

The Chinese are descended from the Tartars, who, thousands of years ago, peopled the great wastes of Siberia, and, by migration and intermarriage, became merged in the people of China, Mongolia, Manchuria, Korea, and Japan. The parent stock was a hardy one, and besides becoming responsible for the peopling of northern and central Asia, they found their way to the south, where they implanted certain characteristics to be found to-day in the peoples of Burma, of Siam, and of Tibet. The first Chinese are said to have settled in the province of Shensi, where, according to the records of the semi-mythical period of Celestial history, they appointed one Fohi to be their first ruler about three thousand years before the Christian era, and to this reputed first monarch of future millions is credited the devising of the leading outlines of the Chinese system of moral and political economy. Though little more than his name has endured, he is supposed to have originated the Chinese calendar, to have introduced the cycle of sixty years, and to have inaugurated that love of exclusiveness and that ex-

A CHINESE FAMILY.

travagant conceit, which form to-day such strongly marked characteristics in the Celestial character.

The original Tartar stock consisted mostly of Nomad tribes. These spread and became dispersed, and, as always happens, the individuality of each set of immigrants to fresh pastures became affected by their geographical surroundings. Thus it came about that the Mongols proper, who had settled in the north-west of Asia, and the Tunjusian or Turanian tribes, who pitched their tents in the north-east, became a rude and semi-barbarous people, shy of intercourse, and given to strife among themselves. Of these, the lowest in civilisation were the Arinians, who peopled the districts of the Yenisei and the Amur Rivers, races who did not cultivate the land, and who ate their meat raw. It is from these that the Manchus are descended, and it is remarkable that such savage and illiterate tribes should have proved the forerunners of so fine and stalwart a race as the people of Modern Manchuria.*

The early history of the Chinese people is a record of civil war, rapine, and robbery, and it is doubtless to the constant struggles which were indulged in that the race owes its power of organisation and its administrative ability. The Chinese and their fellow Asiatics vary in physique and attributes in different parts of the Empire, but in certain characteristics they closely resemble one another. The inhabitants of China proper are the most cultivated and highly civilised of all the subjects of the "King of Heaven." They

* *The Manchus*, by Rev. J. Ross.

possess a literature essentially refined, a love of learning non-existent elsewhere, and a regard for law and order admirable in its consistency. The Mongols, on the other hand, lack all these attributes, the only strong point of which they can boast being a simplicity of taste and love of peace. The Tibetans, like the Mongolians, to whom they are nearly akin, resemble the Burmese rather than the Celestials. They are an indolent race, given to pleasure and practising polyandry. The Siamese, Annamese, and Shans, all of Chinese descent, possess the civilisation of their ancestors without their strong character. They are vain, weak, and effeminate, and in Tonkin and the adjoining French territories, which have been brought under an injudicious governmental system, they are becoming treacherous, mean, and dangerous to those with whom they are brought into contact.

The characteristics of the population of the eighteen provinces vary greatly. The people of northern China are a more stalwart and hardy tribe than those of the south, while the race which is located along the coast line between Shanghai and Canton differs alike in language and in customs from the rest. The inhabitants of Chili and Shansi are strongly opposed to foreign intercourse, and do not hesitate to annoy or even ill-use the stranger within their gates. In Shantung and Anwei the people are more peaceably inclined, and altogether more tolerant of the "barbarians." The most typical of the pure Chinese are to-day to be found in the province of Hunan, where the people possess a

finer physique and more highly developed intelligence than elsewhere. These are, however, the most exclusive of the Chinese, intolerant to a degree, and always ready to attack the foreigner.

The character of the Celestial, like most things connected with his country, is paradoxical. The Chinese possess many attributes which are in themselves admirable. On the other hand, they evince certain shortcomings which are proportionately despicable. The Chinaman is, from his earliest infancy, brought up to entertain a deep respect for age. His parents have power of life and death over him, and he is taught to regard his forebears as his mundane gods. Religion, except as a passive formality, does not trouble him, but in place of any appreciation of sanctity, he absorbs a deep-rooted regard for authority and order, which, except among the rabble population of the large towns, is never lost. He is ridiculously vain, his conceit being a national inheritance, the result of centuries of abstention from intercourse with the outer world. Never having been judged by comparison, China regards herself as the best of all possible things, and resents any suggestion to the contrary. It is doubtless this feeling which has always encouraged her to regard the foreigner as an inferior being, a mere "barbarian," whose presence is to be resented, and whose pretensions are to be severely snubbed. The ingrained vanity thus induced has served to develop a love of splendour, and anything which may serve as an excuse for parade is on this account encouraged. Hence it follows that the Chinese are the most formal, the most

polite, and the most ceremonious nation in existence. Among the classes, from the small merchant to the highest mandarin, every observance, even the most ordinary transactions of daily life, must be conducted with full regard to unwritten law. The result is an inordinate waste of time, and a serious interference with the achievement of any business undertaking.

In point of honesty the Chinee is proverbial. He will lie through thick and thin, for an appreciation of the beauty of truthfulness is non-existent in the Celestial mind. He will squeeze, *i.e.*, take a surreptitious commission, or make an illicit profit out of every transaction in which he is concerned. He will take bribes from his employer's trade rivals, and stick at nothing in order to insure his obtaining what he considers himself justly entitled to. But he will not steal in the sense of abstracting private property or money, and it is little less than remarkable to note how very exceptional it is for a Chinese "boy" to abstract the value of a single "cash" from his master's belongings. One other quality is developed in the Chinaman. He possesses the faculty of application in a degree rarely found among other nations. He is the most industrious worker in the world, and as he can subsist on less than a quarter of what almost any other toiler needs, it follows that he becomes a very serious competitor when pitted against the western workman. On the other hand, in addition to his utter disregard of truth, the Celestial is a born coward, except when his blood is up, when he will morally run amok, and

perpetrate the most hideous crimes. He is a good son, a fairly kind husband, and an abstemious liver. He does not drink to excess, nor does he squander his inheritance. He is the most trustworthy debtor in the world, always pays his dues, and can be trusted to keep his word in business relations. And, finally, the Chinee is the most corrupt creature on earth, and the higher one ascends in the social scale, the more ingrained is the love of undue influence and peculation.

Speaking broadly, the natives of China may be divided into two great divisions—the masses and the mandarin. These two classes are necessary to one another. The former are the workers who produce, the latter the cormorants who devour. The system which obtains throughout the Empire would be impossible in any other country in the world. But in China it works well enough, and even in certain cases appears to benefit both parties. The mandarin are the official class of China. They are of various grades, and perform varied duties, but all are alike underpaid, and each blackmails the people under his authority for his own particular benefit. The people, in turn, toil and generally prosper, except in the case of the mechanics and artisans, who, with the other members of the proletariat, are frequently on the brink of starvation, and do not object to playing into the hands of the officials, in return for their protection. In face of such a line of demarcation between the governors and the governed, it is not surprising that the ambition of well-nigh every young Chinaman is to enter the ranks of the chosen. And every encouragement is offered even to the

poorest and meanest of the sons of the people to join the ranks of officialdom, and, theoretically at least, to rise to the post of viceroy or first adviser to the Son of Heaven himself. And, unlike most principles which are preached in China, this is actually borne out by facts. The test by which merit is alone recognised throughout the Empire is that afforded by examination in the sacred books of China, including the writings of Confucius; and it is familiarity with these, and the faculty of writing a lengthy analysis, accompanied by a moral disquisition on the precepts set by way of a theme, that decides the candidates' abilities in the direction of governing the people.

It is towards the acquisition of a familiarity with the Chinese classics that the education of the youth of the country is directed. The inculcation of useful knowledge is nowhere attempted. The one desire on the part of the pupil is to succeed in obtaining the much-coveted degree, which may insure his obtaining an official post. The amount of work necessary to achieve this end is considerable, and the number of the candidates who every year go up for examination is out of all proportion to the number of posts likely to become vacant. It is no unusual thing for ten or even twelve thousand candidates to present themselves for examination in a big city such as Peking or Hangchau, each being accommodated with a tiny cell in which he remains during the six days over which the examination extends. Archdeacon Moule relates how, on one occasion, far more candidates presented themselves than could be squeezed into the cells, and those who could

not be accommodated were placed in sedan chairs with a board in front to write upon.*

The labour entailed by these examinations is very great, and numbers of candidates have died from fatigue and exposure. Of the nine or ten thousand competitors who attend, not more than 250 or 300 will attain their ambition. Those who are so fortunate as to pass, obtain a degree in accordance with their merit, and enter the ranks of the literati. These fortunate ones are entitled to enter for the higher degrees. The highest degrees are competed for at Peking, and the triumphant candidates presented to the Emperor in person.

Admirable as the examination system appears, and minute as are the precautions taken to prevent collusion or unfair play, the whole system is delusive, since, like most things in China, it is not necessarily what it appears to be. It is an undoubted fact that, while the time-honoured system of obtaining a substitute who should, under the candidate's name, pass through the examination for him, has been practically abolished, and though the supervision is now of the strictest, many degrees are obtained by judicious "persuasion" of the examiners, and it is not at all difficult to believe the statement made to me by a Chinese gentleman, who judged his country by the light of experience gained during a residence in western lands, that it would be easy for me to insure my obtaining the Chin Shih, or third degree, if I cared to fulfil certain necessary

* *New China and Old: Personal Recollections and Observations of Thirty Years.*

preliminaries, which did not include cramming or instruction of any kind! It is, indeed, an open secret that degrees of scholarship, like most other things in China, can be secured by a tactful greasing of the official palm.

It is, of course, impossible to provide office for all the successful candidates who pass the examinations, and the number of literati without posts or emoluments increases year by year. These occupy an anomalous position, owing to the fact that they must not embark in trade, and they are therefore compelled to become the hangers-on of the yamens of the mandarin, and obtain a living as best they may, the most favoured method employed being to play the part of go-between—for a consideration—between the mandarin and his suitors. To this necessity is due much of the corruption which disfigures Chinese justice. The literati who are on good terms with the magistrates exert their influence on behalf of those who can afford to fee them, handing a portion of the fees received to the great man himself after his decision is given. Thus it comes about that all parties are satisfied, except the discomfited suitor, who, being, as a rule, the poorest person interested, does not receive any sympathy from his fellows, and is speedily reconciled to the fate which has overtaken him as a result of his penuriousness. And it often happens that the greatest offenders against the law are suffered to escape scot-free, the mandarin who has given them the benefit of the doubt consoling himself for his subversion of justice by reflecting, as he pockets his vail, that another opportunity is

pretty safe to crop up ere long, when, in the absence of pecuniary bias, justice may be done. In cases where both sides fee the mandarin, he has the consolation, when discomfiting one or the other, that, as soon as sentence has been pronounced, he will, most probably, receive a bigger bribe, in order that the culprit may escape the penalty which he has been condemned to pay. And so the farce continues, the greatest latitude being accorded to the man with the longest purse.

The two characteristics which are most marked in the Chinese character are ignorance and conservatism. The one is, to a large extent, the outcome of the other, and each is, in its way, sublime. Except at those treaty ports where constant intercourse with western peoples has in some degree educated the natives, there is practically no limit to the supreme ignorance which is inherent in the Celestial. He possesses a marked individuality, untempered by learning, and his innate independence exhibits itself in strength of character and a disposition to defend the principles to which he is accustomed to give credence. The whole political system of China being an unqualified absolutism, the individual is accustomed to accept things as they are, and the idea of reform or progress never enters his head. But no new departure, even in the method or degree of inflicting a customary injustice, is tolerated. The Chinee recognises that the law governing a certain set of circumstances is one thing, and the customary manner of carrying that law out quite another. He realises that he is being wronged, or "squeezed," by an illegal enact-

ment, and adapts himself to circumstances accordingly. But should the offending Totai, or Viceroy retire, and his successor attempt to alter or increase the latitude taken by his predecessor, trouble is certain to arise, and in the end a complaint is most probably sent to the censors, who, if they are not fee'd on an elaborate scale by the delinquent, will, without fail, visit his enormities with a suitable penalty, and as likely as not cause his appointment to be cancelled.

Punishments in China vary greatly according to the position of the offender. In the case of mandarin and literati, sentences are rarely carried out, for the reason that such persons have usually the means of bribing the officials charged with their enforcement. With the proletariat, on the other hand, "justice" is short and speedy, and the magistrate, who acts as counsel, judge, and jury, awards a penalty, and, except in the case of a death sentence, the award is made good then and there. The yamen, or magisterial court, which exists in every township throughout the Empire, and is always open to suitors, thus becomes a justice-room, prison, and reformatory rolled into one, and no sooner is a sentence of a flogging or the application of the "cangue" delivered, than the attendant "runners," charged with giving effect to the least word of the mandarin, seize the culprit, and flog him, or place his head in the instrument of torture, as the case may be. The subject of Chinese justice will be treated of at greater length when I come to deal with the system of government in China. For the present, I have said sufficient to

show the relations existing between the official and the non-official classes, and to explain how the whole system of social relationship is controlled by bribe and "squeeze,"—a custom which affects the intercourse of all classes throughout the country.

The individual life of the middle-class Chinaman is fairly colourless. He is, as a rule, a hard and a steady worker. Sober in his habits, orderly and methodical, he evinces a marked respect for his superiors, and rubs along complacently, but rarely having disputes with his fellows or giving trouble to his superiors. He is, as a rule, on good terms with the authorities. He is lightly taxed. His career is entirely in his own hands, and he is free to marry as many wives as he can afford to maintain, though, while polygamy is permitted, it is the exception rather than the rule among the great middle class.

The ethics of Chinese life are based on the principle of the family. The head of the family is the king of the race, just as, to maintain the illusion, the Emperor is regarded as the father of his people. Parents have absolute power over their children,—a power which they are apt to exercise, in the case of girls especially, by killing them while young. No sacrifice is too great for a child to make for its parents, even when the child has entered into middle age; and the patriarchal system is carried out to the extent of all the children and grandchildren dwelling under the roof of the head of the clan. The position of the women is, however, an unenviable one. The Chinese woman is regarded as being, upon the whole, a useless individual, whose

only possible career is that of a mother. Single women are the exception, owing to the fact that the surplusage of girls is counteracted by infanticide; and, the possession of a wife carrying with it few responsibilities, every Chinaman marries in early life. The mere marriage ceremonial does not materially affect the status of the bride. Vows there are none, nor is courting, in the western sense of the word, customary. Marriages are arranged by professional match-makers, who praise the girls to their customers, until one lends a willing ear, when negotiations are entered on by the parents of both parties. The negotiations endure a considerable time, and are conducted according to a fixed code. The parties most interested in the issue do not, except in the rarest cases, meet, or even see one another, and when all is arranged, and the marriage brought about, the bride is delivered over to the ardent husband much as though she were a bundle of goods, and it is only on her removing her veil that the benedict gets to know what the partner of his joys and sorrows looks like.

The rites of marriage are purely ceremonial, and do not take religious form; nor is the nuptial knot absolute. It is often abrogated by mutual assent, and cases occur in which both parties marry again. The bride is not regarded as a full-fledged woman until she has borne a child. Up till this period she is spoken of as still a girl. In the event of a wife becoming widowed, she, as a rule, poses as being inconsolable, and devotes herself to the supervision of the family, but

more especially to waiting on her husband's parents, with whom she has lived as a matter of course, from the day of her wedding. If a man becomes a widower, he does not go out of his way to display his grief. There are plenty of girls to choose from, and he rarely finds any difficulty in obtaining a second wife.

The treatment accorded the women of China is very much the reverse of that which obtains among western nations. In the Flowery Land the women are regarded as an encumbrance, whose only utility consists in the procreation of children, and the tending of their elders. The notion of cultivating women's society is as unheard of as it is impossible, and there is little sympathy or good-fellowship even between brothers and sisters. In some cases the husband, or parent, endeavours to employ women to his own advantage, and they may occasionally be seen performing men's work in the fields, while at the treaty ports they are largely employed in miscellaneous callings. And it is on record that a woman has been seen harnessed to the plough alongside a cow and a donkey, while her husband drove the team,* but such exhibitions are not common; indeed, I doubt whether the instance could be regarded as other than exceptional.

The "golden rule" of the Chinese is the exhibition of respect towards the older members of the family, and nothing certainly brings more fame to the individual than the performance of some striking act of self-abasement for the benefit of an aged relative. The custom of infanticide is one which has obtained in

* Holcombe, *The Real Chinaman.*

many parts of China for ages. It does not, as a rule, take the form of actual murder, but consists rather in assisting the laws of nature. Thus an infant will be neglected and permitted to perish, or, if it sicken, will be put aside and allowed to take its chance. Children under the age of puberty are rarely buried singly, but are placed on the dead cart which patrols the big towns at intervals. The custom of disposing of girl children is so common an incident in Chinese life, that notices are occasionally met with by the sides of pools to the effect that "Girls may not be drowned here."* In many parts of the country special repositories are provided to receive the bodies of children who have been suffered to perish. By the kindness of Mr T. W. Goodall of the China Inland Mission, I am able to reproduce an excellent photograph of one of these "towers of silence."

The funeral rites of the Chinese are, in themselves, fairly simple, but they are nevertheless attended with certain peculiarities. It is the great aim of every Chinaman to be buried in as close proximity as possible to his native place. This desire often necessitates the intermission of a lengthy period between the death and burial, and causes considerable annoyance to those who are not as insensible as the native Chinese to olfactory sensations. And the Celestials are prone to take dire offence at any suggested interference with the keeping of their dead above ground. It was this very question which caused rioting at Shanghai the other day, when objections were urged by the residents of the French

* Douglas, *Society in China.*

settlement to the maintenance of a score or more

TOWER USED AS A REPOSITORY FOR INFANTS.

bodies in a disused temple, pending a suitable oppor-

tunity for conveying them to distant parts of the territory for burial. The normal Chinaman has neither a sense of smell or a knowledge of the first principles of sanitation. Indeed, it is a question whether he is capable of any sensation whatever. It is this peculiarity which gives him that stoic placidity which is so characteristic of his race.

Besides the desirability of conveying the body to the place of its birth, it is deemed highly necessary by those most concerned that both the date of removal and the exact spot chosen for the interment should be carefully selected by properly qualified soothsayers, whose services are in great request on such occasions. In no case, however, is the body interred before it has remained above ground for forty-nine days, the allotted period of full mourning, and this interval is frequently greatly prolonged.

The bodies of single women and concubines are not, as a rule, buried, but are cast away, to be devoured by the birds or animals, or to rot until absorbed by the earth.

There is in China an utter absence of that fear of death so general in most countries. Indeed, the one great idea which finds expression during the lifetime of the middle-class Chinee is the desire to attain a funeral calculated to attract attention to the record of the departed. It is the rule, rather than the exception, for a Chinaman to be provided with his coffin long before there is any need of it, and among the poorer folk a well-designed casket is deemed the most fitting gift which could be made by an affectionate and dutiful son.

It has been remarked, by an acute student of the land and its people,* that the needs of China are only two in number—character and conscience. I am prepared to admit the justice of the sarcasm so far as the conscience, for it would be idle to dispute the fact. Not only has the typical Celestial no conscience, but he is unable to appreciate the signification of the term, as being something intangible, and quite outside the limits of his unimaginative consciousness. But as regards the attribute of character, I must stand up for the much-maligned heathen. I hold that the Chinee is full of character — that he is positively bursting with it. That he is wanting in individuality I grant, for one Chinaman is very much like another, and Ah Sin is pretty certain to act in given circumstances in precisely the same way as Lo Ben did on a similar occasion. But this similarity of thought, so far from pointing to a lack of character, rather suggests strength. The truth is, that the normal Celestial is built on a different design to the western man, and it is, for this reason, a matter of extreme difficulty to appreciate either his reasons or his conclusions. The Chinese view of everything is different to our own. The Chinaman's logic is based on the transposition of cause and effect, and the results he arrives at only serve, when judged from our standpoint, to make confusion worse confounded. To take an instance: A missionary, after endless trouble, and by dint of great persuasion, succeeded in getting a native to come to a Bible reading. The Chinee came and listened, but, after the reading with its subsequent

* A. H. Smith, *Chinese Characteristics.*

explanation was over, he refused to pledge himself to return, giving as his reason, and in all good faith, that if he read that book, and *then* told a lie, he would go to hell, and as he did not want to go to hell, he would far rather not read it.* It would, on the face of it, be merely futile to attempt to reason with such a logician as this. And yet his ratiocination may be taken as a very fair example of Chinese thought. The connection between cause and effect is unrecognised and unrecognisable by the Chinese intelligence. It would be as easy to reason a "compradore" out of the custom of extorting "squeeze" as it would be to drive the certainty of effect following cause into the head of a Chinese working man. I will cite one more instance of a different kind: The great Yellow River or Hoang Ho, known as China's Sorrow, has, as already explained, many times overrun its banks, and sacrificed hundreds of thousands of lives in so doing. Various attempts had been made to keep the river to its course, but without success, and at last the governments of Honan and Shantung decided to act on the advice of foreign engineers, and proceeded to plant willows and other plants, which possess the faculty of taking firm root and binding earth together, in the hope that these measures would prevent the sandy embankments from giving way at the next spate. Immediately the work was done, the people around, most of them badly off, but all acquainted only too well with the treacherous river, and many yet mourning for those who had become victims to its overflow, pounced down upon

* A. H. Smith, *Chinese Characteristics*.

the stripling trees, and carted them away for firewood. Is it possible for idiotic recklessness to go further than this?

From whatever direction a Chinaman's reasoning faculties are approached, the response invariably partakes of the nature of the unexpected. Ask a Celestial whether he does not think that trial by jury would be superior to the existing system of trial by mandarin, and he will tell you that he does not, because, if one man will often do an injustice, it follows that twelve men will commit much greater injustices; and if an attempt be made to discuss the woman question with him, he will fight shy of the main issue, and evade it cleverly enough by replying that it is necessary for the English to treasure their womenkind, since they value them highly, and spend much on their education and their dress; but in the case of the Chinese, women are cheap, and little or nothing is spent over them. Why, then, should they be treasured?

I have incidentally mentioned the subject of "squeeze" as one which is ingrained in the Celestial constitution. To do justice to its importance would require a separate volume, but I will endeavour to make the matter clear in a couple of pages. The word "squeeze" is a synonym for a secret commission or illegal exaction which the Chinee extorts from every person with whom he deals and from every transaction with which he is concerned. It is a modern survival of the *malatolta* of the Middle Ages, quite as imperative and even more frequent in its infliction. According to the Chinese code of ethics,

there can be no legal claim on a man's abilities in return for a mere fixed wage. He regards a salary as a species of retaining fee, which pledges him to accord his presence at his employer's residence or place of business, and the performance of the most simple duties. Any business transactions in which he may represent his employer's interests must be separately and specially rewarded, the reward taking the form of a small percentage or commission on the transaction, and in practice it has been found that, despite the utter immorality of the custom, the employer does better, and buys cheaper, by employing a native to act for him, despite the squeeze he extorts on his own behalf, than he could do were he to discharge his servant, and deal with tradespeople or merchants himself. In short, the native servant or compradore will extort his "squeeze" even if he has to rob his employer in order to obtain it, but he will not permit anyone else to rob him, and extracts the best possible terms from the other side, in order to save his master's pocket. The Englishman could never deal as efficaciously with the native merchant as can his own employé, and so, despite endless attempts at ending the objectionable principle, the "squeeze" continues to flourish, and is likely to do so to the end of time.

It is absolutely hopeless for a European to attempt to best a Chinaman. To do so is the merest waste of time. His smartness and his resources are alike unlimited. The thing has been tried more than once without result. One instance of repeated failure has been put on record by one of the most able of the

ministers ever sent to Peking by the United States.* The sufferer discovered that his steward was, beyond doubt, charging him more for his purchases than he had actually paid. After taking some considerable trouble to verify the prices, the servant was taxed with the offence, and immediately, with that inimitable blandness so characteristic of a Chinese, confessed the imputation, and promised to offend no more. Observation was continued, and the master of the establishment was satisfied that the servant only charged what he had paid, but it suddenly dawned upon him that the weight was habitually short. He thereupon invested in a pair of Chinese scales, such as were used in the shops from which his purchases came, but found that his suspicions were unfounded, and that the weights were correct. All went well for a while, until he one day accidentally made the discovery that his scales weighed only fourteen ounces to the pound. He went to considerable pains, and, with the assistance of a friendly mandarin, obtained another set of scales, which were carefully tested and found correct. And as the quality of his scales improved, so did the quantity of the meat. His joints all proved to be full weight. But he had not exhausted the ingenuity of his servant, for, after the joint had been scaled, the cook would cut off a big slice, which was speedily returned to the butcher, who repaid its value to the servant as an incentive to retain his custom. The best part of this story is the defence entered by the cook when taxed with having cut off a portion of the meat. With the greatest deference of

* Holcombe.

manner, he admitted that the joint appeared very small, but added, "Your Excellency should not fail to make allowance for the fact that, in a dry climate like Peking, meat shrinks much more in cooking than in your honourable country." *

There is, in short, no possible means of evading the universal system of squeeze. If a servant is discharged for a repetition of the offence, his successor continues the enforced impost in an increased ratio, and shares the result with his predecessor. To argue against the practice is mere waste of words. The squeeze is a national institution, and so it is ever likely to remain.

The whole social system of China is one systematic fraud. The people might fairly be spoken of as a nation of make-believe—a nation which, under the vaguest outer show of immaculate virtue, is shamelessly venal and rotten to the core, and the worst of the position is that the rottenness starts from the top, and is gradually permeating down to the lowest depths. The whole law of China is framed on the principles enunciated by Confucius and Mencius applied to the requirements of the family. Virtue and uprightness, honesty and truth, are held up as the first necessities of existence, in a country where neither of these attributes exists. The organisation of the social system is specially designed to give prominence to the display of disinterested action and intrinsic merit, but the safeguards provided are so numerous and so easily available as to offer a premium on vice and cor-

* *The Real Chinaman.*

ruption. Honour is accorded to special cases of distinguished conduct in a variety of ways. A triumphal arch may be erected, by special command of the Emperor, as a record of some piece of self-sacrifice reported of a mandarin in a far-off province, though the distinction may, as likely as not, have been purchased of the Emperor's advisers—for a consideration. Tablets of honour are, at intervals, presented to specially selected recipients, who may be, in fact, the biggest rogues in the Empire, while, as an extreme compliment, a township may request the gift of the boots of a mandarin whom it is desired for some reason to conciliate, and these, when obtained, are hung up in a conspicuous place near a gateway, to be regarded with admiration by all who see them, until they fall to pieces from decay.

The Chinese mind, in common with the Chinese body, delights in being swaddled out of all shape. Just as the Celestial loves, even on the hottest day, to swathe himself in padded robes, until his bodily proportions become a matter of speculation, so does the Chinaman delight in wrapping his mind in a tissue of false suggestion and deceit, for the pure love of misleading those with whom he comes into contact. This intense love of crookedness manifests itself in many ways, but in none more markedly than in the pleasure taken by the natives of the Flowery Land in chaffering over their business dealings. No Chinaman ever yet condescended to make a straightforward reply to a simple question. No shopkeeper dreams of quoting anything like a reasonable price for any article which a possible customer may chance to

examine. The visitor's question is certain to bring forth, by way of reply, a demand for five or six times the amount which the dealer will gladly accept, and this is not due to the desire so freely evinced by the Italian or the Turkish vendor of goods to swindle his customer. The Chinaman names a figure which is ridiculous even to the non-expert, and entirely prohibitive, and should the inquirer show his disgust or annoyance by walking away, the merchant waxes wroth, and abuses him in terms which there is no need to translate. The native is simply jumping at an opportunity to do a little bargaining. The chaffering is even more to him than the profit he eventually secures, and I am not at all certain but that, in the event of the customer paying the preposterous price demanded in the first instance, the vendor would be inclined to be quite as abusive as if he had merely put the object down and walked off. It takes quite a quarter of an hour to make a small purchase in a Peking or Canton shop, and if the article required be one that amounts to more than two or three teals, the purchaser must be prepared to waste quite double that time, even if he be disposed to pay through the nose for his fancy.

The habit of chaffering has, in short, long since taken its place as a national characteristic. It is regarded as a species of etiquette, and to forego it is equivalent to exhibiting a lack of breeding. Chinese etiquette is, throughout its many ramifications, as purposeless, hollow, and trying a fraud as any of the many shams of which the Celestial *modus vivendi* is

composed. Among the well-to-do Chinese, every action, all routine, is subject to unwritten rules of conduct, which are as harassing as they are absurd. To neglect them means to exhibit a want of breeding, the penalty for which is open insult, for the Chinese gentleman, in his conceit of superiority, is incapable of making any allowances whatever. To obey these dictates of oriental "bobbery" entails the loss of much time and a trial of temper without producing the least result, for the suave and dignified Chinee, who with much parade makes a show of refusing to be seated in your presence, would make no scruple about bringing the interview to a close, and having you summarily shown out, should you act on his suggestion and take a seat before he does, and, in the same way, no matter how far you may have ridden, or how hot the day may be, you have only to taste the cup of tea, which is, as a matter of course, presented to you on your arrival, before being pressed to do so half-a-dozen times, to cause your host to consider himself grossly insulted, and you will possibly see him flounce out of the room. Yet while the dignified mandarin, replete in the conception of his own superiority, insists on your according him the full honours of Chinese etiquette, you are compelled to sit by him while he makes no scruple of eructating in your face, and spits on the floor while you reply to his inquiries as to the state of "your honourable health," and the future intentions of "your most dignified personality."

It is necessary that I should append one caution to the remarks I have made on the above topic.

It is, that the details I have given as to the Chinese attributes, more especially in regard to the subject of the last paragraph, concern the typical Chinese in China. I would give especial prominence to this fact, inasmuch as I shall show, further on, that it is quite possible for a Chinee to be both a gentleman and a man of taste. There are, indeed, at this present moment, several Chinese gentlemen occupying exalted positions in Europe, who, in point of breeding, manners, and education, would compare favourably with some English bearers of aristocratic names.* But the Chinaman in China, with his undoubted abilities cramped, his intelligence narrowed by ignorance, prejudice, and conceit, his failings accentuated by an utter freedom from criticism, supplies a spectacle which is surely its own severest condemnation.

The feature which stands in strongest relief in the Chinese character is, without question, the marvellous adaptability possessed by the typical Celestial. He is an essentially handy person, and can turn his attention to anything—from carrying weights to keeping house, and from negotiating a bargain to minding the baby. Climate, temperature, and surroundings are alike immaterial to him. He is as serviceable in the north of Asia as in the Tropics, and he pays no more attention to his housing or his

* The late Marquis Tseng; Li Fong Pao, long ambassador at Berlin; Kaw Hong Beng, secretary to Chang Chi Tung, viceroy of the two Hu provinces, who graduated at Edinburgh; Mr T. Y. Lo, secretary to the Chinese legation; and his excellency Sir Chihchen Lofengluh, the Chinese ambassador to this country, and a well-known figure in society, are a few examples of Chinamen whose education and breeding leave nothing to be desired, even when judged from the most insular standpoint.

food than he does to his employment. He exists on less than most other men, and eats with relish what no other man would touch. He works for a lower wage, yet accomplishes more than the white man, and, provided he is given a copy to start with, there is nothing in the way of handiwork he cannot achieve.

It is commonly believed that the Chinee is not a fighting animal. The idea is erroneous, and doubtless arises from the fact that he has not succeeded in holding his own against his more civilised opponents. But the cause rests with his lack of training, and not with any inherent shortcoming. The methods, till recently, and, indeed, probably to-day, in force in the Chinese army are not calculated to turn the yellow soldier into a first-class fighting machine. What is to be said of an army of which one-third is supplied with magazine rifles, while the rest use bows and arrows? An army led by civilians, who, while employing German officers to instruct their artillery in the use of Krupp guns, teach their infantry to make faces in order to frighten the enemy! In all those instances in which the Chinese have been opposed to an enemy of their own calibre they have held their own, and the achievements recorded of the "ever victorious army" raised and led by General Gordon against the Taeping rebels are not such as to suggest any doubt as to the capacity of the Chinese when properly led.

The character in which the Celestial shows to best advantage is, without question, that of a trader. John Chinaman is a born merchant. He possesses all the

qualities which go to create the successful dealer; his love of chaffering has been already dwelt on. Wherever he goes he carries his wits with him, and employs them to his marked advantage. The small expenditure necessary to his existence and his love of saving stand him in good stead, and result in the gradual accumulation of wealth by the Chinese traders in every part of the world.

PRISONERS WEARING THE CANGUE, WITH THEIR GAOLER.

CHAPTER III.

THE GOVERNMENT.

The system of government in force throughout the Chinese Empire is one of despotism, tempered by philanthropy. It is modelled on the idea of the family, and the Emperor, who is regarded as the father of his people, is, in turn, spoken of as the Son of Heaven itself. This last attribute, which is reiterated *ad nauseam* in the reports of His Majesty's movements, requires a little explanation, inasmuch as it is somewhat confusing. The term "Son of Heaven" is not assumed with any pretence of divine descent. It is used to mark the fact that the ruler of the Chinese is the one human being who is permitted to act as go-between. He stands between the people and the divinity, and he alone possesses the right to worship and offer sacrifice at the altar of heaven, which is jealously guarded, and to which no person besides the Emperor is ever allowed access. On the assumption that the Emperor attains his authority direct from heaven, he is regarded as the source of all authority. He is considered infallible and omniscient, and any expression of his wishes, whether in accordance with or contrary to the written law, is accepted without question,

as a satisfactory conclusion of the matter in hand. The Emperor is regarded as the proprietor of the country and the people. He has an easement in all property, and a lien over every life. He is, in short, the head of the Chinese people, just as the father is the head of his family; and he enjoys, nominally at least, the same rights, but surrounded with more splendour, and carried into effect with greater pomp and ceremony.

The actual power enjoyed by this paternal autocrat is an absolutely unknown quantity. In China, theory and practice seldom go hand in hand, and it is more than suspected that, while every enactment is published as being the will of the Son of Heaven, there is a good deal achieved without any reference to the Emperor at all,—just as many of his ordinances are allowed to remain unfulfilled and disregarded, owing to the exercise of superior influence by the great officers of State. These personages, consisting of certain members of the "imperial" family, and the most favoured mandarins in the land, have alone the right of access to the Emperor's presence. They advise him in council, give tongue to his wishes, and carry into effect his proclamations. There is, of course, no parliament in China, but there is a species of cabinet and a council of State, over which the Emperor presides, and which is responsible for the practical government of the Empire. Besides these important councils, which deal with the more important affairs of State, there are six public offices or Boards, whose duty is to regulate the local and departmental affairs of the country. These are the

Civil Office, Board of Revenue, Board of Rites, Board of War, Board of Punishments, and Board of Works. Of these, the Board of Punishments unquestionably gets through the most work. The civil office attends to all such matters as the conferring of titles, granting of precedence, and the rewarding of meritorious deeds performed by officials. The Board of Revenue, as its name suggests, supervises the national revenue. The Board of Rites watches over the ritual of all the public functions commanded by the Emperor. It is also responsible for all the ceremonial followed at Court ; and the regulation of the rites suitable to an eclipse, or any other national "calamity," occupies its most serious attention. The Boards of War and of Works are sufficiently defined in their titles. The former directs the evolutions of an army which is practically non-existent, while the latter neglects the constructive duties it was established to perform.

There is one other Board, which was established as recently as 1861, when the signing of the treaty of Tientsin necessitated some provision for the conduct of business with foreigners. The Council in question is known as the Tsungli Yamen, or Foreign Office, which was called into existence by a decree issued 19th January 1861, the number of members of which the Board was to consist being originally fixed at three, but subsequently enlarged to eleven. I shall have a good deal to say about the Tsungli Yamen when I come to speak of the foreign policy of China. For the present it can be passed by, inasmuch as it does not affect the Emperor in his relation to his people.

The provincial government of China is more akin to that of a republic of federated states than to an Empire under despotic rule. China proper is divided into eighteen provinces. Three of these are administered by governors, the rest being in charge of viceroys, several of whom rule over twin territories, which, for administrative purposes, are coupled together. Thus the provinces of Hupeh and Hunan are under the rule of the Viceroy Chang Chi Tung, so well known as an avowed opponent of the English idea, and in the same way the provinces of Kwangtung and Kwangsi are under one ruler. Each provincial government is autonomous, and to all intents and purposes a distinct country. The governor or viceroy is a despot without interference. His responsibilities are restricted to the maintenance of peace and the remittance of a certain amount of revenue to Peking at the end of the year. So long as he observes these conditions, and provided that his remittances do not fall below the average of previous years, the mandarin remains monarch of all he surveys, free from criticism, an autocrat of the first rank. He may be severe, or even brutal, corrupt, and dishonest. He may indulge in any vice he pleases, and may grow wealthy, despite his small salary, at the expense of his people; but so long as he remits the revenue expected, and succeeds in keeping out of such trouble as would necessitate the central government bestirring itself, he may enjoy the spoils of his office undisturbed.

It must, of course, be borne in mind that these

mandarins have all been appointed to their posts on the strength of having passed certain examinations with credit. There is absolutely no test of fitness to govern, nor is any inquiry made into the character or individual peculiarities of the future ruler. The Chinee who achieves a certain number of marks for an analytical essay on the casuistry of Confucius, becomes, in due course, if he has luck, the ruler of a province, or at least its chancellor or prefect; and he then proceeds to enjoy himself, and make the most of his opportunities for accumulating wealth.

Every viceroy or governor is supported by a treasurer, a literary chancellor, a judge, a "totai" or superintendent of assize, and a number of magistrates. The patriarchal system is followed throughout, and each official is responsible to his immediate superior, the viceroy or governor being answerable directly to the Emperor. Each of these officers is a mandarin, and all have attained their positions, ostensibly at least, by examination. Many of them will probably be men of the poorest origin, and with the smallest amount of general knowledge or of principle.

The lack of information which these men, as a rule, exhibit, is scarcely to be believed. It is on record that when, in 1870, one of the most prominent officials in Peking, who had for years held constant intercourse with the foreign ministers at that city, was despatched to Europe on a special mission, he gave directions that a large quantity of salt should be packed with his baggage, as he was accustomed to use it with his food, and knew that the Europeans had none. Again,

in 1884, a member of the Imperial Cabinet asked whether foreigners had any form of marriage contract, or whether the sexes lived promiscuously together.*

But far more startling than the gross ignorance and self-sufficiency of the official class in China is their corruptness. This is, in part, due to the love of gain and lack of moral principle inherent in the Chinese character. But it is, without doubt, largely encouraged by the absurd system of insufficient pay which prevails. The mandarin receives a salary out of all proportion alike to the importance of his position and the duties he has to perform. Indeed, one of the greatest authorities on China has said : "The constitution of the civil service renders it next to impossible that any office-holder can be clean-handed in the European sense."† Appointments are nominally for three years only, and the shortness of this tenure offers another inducement to the mandarin to feather his nest as speedily as may be possible. Despite these facts, the regulations for the prevention of corruptness or undue influence are very stringent, and no mandarin is permitted to take office in his native province, or to employ a relation in his service.

The system of corruption which endures extends its ramifications to the furthest limits of the kingdom. A mandarin appointed to a province with a salary insufficient to pay the current expenses of his yamen runners, will, by dint of retailing "justice" to the highest bidder, and accepting bribes from any person

* Holcombe. † Professor R. K. Douglas.

with whom he comes into contact, speedily acquire wealth. He will, as a rule, protect his underlings against any charges brought against them, even if the grossest bribery, or even extortion, be proved, unless it occurs to him that the offender has not handed to him a "present" proportionate to the haul he has made. In such a case the defaulter will be forthwith deprived

LEPERS AT DINNER, PAKHOI LEPER ASYLUM.

of his office, his superior knowing well that to disgrace him will result profitably, by extracting further and larger bribes, with a view to obtaining the reinstatement of the offender. But as the big man bleeds those within his jurisdiction, so is he himself bled by the central government. He remits the revenue he has collected to Peking, and, as he does so, forwards

a suitable present of money to the particular member of the council who obtained him his preferment, and who naturally expects to profit by the goodwill he has exhibited. The minister of State extends his protection over the viceroy, and in return draws an income from him, and if it appears that the mandarin is growing wealthy too fast, or is not remitting bribes in proper proportion to his peculations, he will be speedily reminded of his offence, and as likely as not be recalled. More than one viceroy has thus been shelved, and instances have occurred in which the extent of the wealth supposed to have been accumulated has been so great as to cause the central government to threaten to pass the sentence of death, on the ground of the mandarin's having used extortion in order to screw money out of his people. In these cases the mandarin has had no option but to offer to refund large sums of money, which, having been duly paid over, are divided between the high officials privy to the transaction, and the viceroy purged of his offence, is permitted to return to his province a poorer but a wiser man.

It would need a bulky volume to detail the various methods employed by the mandarin of China for enriching themselves at the expense of the country and its people. The military officials, all of them mandarin of high degree — for in military and naval affairs the test of merit is the same as in the civil service —derive a considerable income from bribes paid them by aged or sick Chinamen, in order that their names may be entered on the army registers, and that they may receive the monthly allowance of rice to which

all soldiers are entitled. The transaction works out satisfactorily for both the mandarin and the civilian, the only sufferer being the country or province, and that does not matter to either of the participators in the deal. On the same principle, it is not an uncommon thing for the people of a district to rise in ostensible rebellion. The mandarin, who has peculated his soldiers' pay, is unprepared for the emergency. He represents the gravity of the affair to the central government, and is authorised to expend money on extra men and the purchase of material. As soon as this is arranged, he approaches the leader of the rebels, and makes terms with him for so much down, and having paid the money over, the rising collapses, peace is resumed, and the mandarin pockets the surplus he has been authorised to expend, and sends a glowing report of his victory over the rebels, which most likely secures him some mark of distinction as the reward of his heroism. The Chinese official is, with certain notable exceptions, the most corrupt creature on earth. His corruptness is partly inherited, and partly the outcome of opportunity, but it is rendered, to a certain extent, unavoidable by those above him. And in no sphere of action is the amount of peculation and fraud greater than in the apportionment of taxation.

For fiscal purposes the Chinese Empire is divided into eleven governments, each under a viceroy or governor, who rules supreme in his own territory. These potentates have a number of lesser mandarin under them, engaged in the collecting of revenue,

which is in due course transmitted to the superior authority until, after passing through a multiplicity of hands, what is left of the original sum finds its way, greatly diminished, to the *Hoopoo* or Board of Revenue at Peking. The appointment of viceroys, as well as that of the smaller fry, is theoretically vested in the Emperor, but for all practical purposes the nominations are governed by two factors: the passing of certain examinations and the payment of bribes. The office of mandarin is only bestowed on one of the literati who has given proof of his ability to govern by an acquaintance with the books of antiquity. As the number of these far exceeds that of the appointments available, the position goes, as a rule, to the applicant who makes it most worth the patron's while to favour his cause. The constitution of the civil service thus renders it practically impossible for an office-holder to enter on his duties clean-handed, and in the result the mandarin assumes office with the fixed determination to do the best he can for himself; in other words, to collect as large sums in the way of taxes as possible, and to remit as little as will suffice to prevent his recall. The various districts throughout China are annually debited with a certain sum, which it is expected the viceroy will remit to Peking. So long as the total named is duly received, the mandarin remains in favour. If it decreases, an inquiry is held, and the officer sent for to answer awkward questions, or he may be deposed without trial. Should he, on the other hand, remit more than his predecessor, he will possibly receive promotion to a larger district, but

he will certainly evoke the enmity of his immediate superiors, who invariably resent any attempts at spoiling their own particular chances of elevation. There is, in short, neither a Budget nor a Civil List. Estimates are unknown, and the collectors are turned loose upon the people, whom they may devour at their will, restricted only by the condition that they shall remit a certain annual payment to Peking, which shall not be less than that which has previously been derived from the same district.

The sources of revenue in China are various, and may be conveniently classified under six heads, namely:—1, the land tax; 2, the salt duty; 3, the opium duty; 4, the "kwan" (native Custom-house) impost; 5, the likin, or transit dues on merchandise; and 6, the Imperial Maritime Customs. Of these, the second and third are nominally fixed duties, variable only in the amount of likin demanded on their account during transit from one district to another. The kwan varies greatly at different places, but applies entirely to native traffic. The Imperial Maritime Customs represent the duty of 5 per cent. levied on all goods imported into China. This tax is collected by European officers under the supervision of Sir Robert Hart, the inspector-general, and paid to the Board of Revenue at Peking without going through the hands of any intermediaries. As a result, the sums received from this source of income are honestly dealt with, and form a very important item in the total revenue. The likin duty on merchandise is an impost which dates from 1853, when it was introduced in certain districts, but it

was not formally legalised until 1860, when the large expenditure necessary to cope with the Taeping rising made it imperative that a new form of revenue should be discovered. An Imperial decree was accordingly issued, authorising the general establishment of likin barriers outside the principal towns, and at intervals along the main roads throughout the Empire. The mandarin were authorised to publish a tariff of duties to be paid on all goods passing these barriers. As is customary in China, the officials followed out the terms of the decree just so far as it suited them to do so. Barriers were accordingly erected, and duties levied forthwith, at intervals averaging 20 miles. No tariff was published, however, the amount levied being that which the official in charge could manage to squeeze out of the unfortunate trader. In cases where the owner of the goods refused to be mulct to the extent desired, the barrier would be closed and the goods impounded ; and so unreasonable did the collectors become that they often killed trade by their repeated imposts.

In order to terminate this state of things, pressure was brought to bear on the authorities at Peking, with the result that " transit passes " were instituted, under which a certain fixed percentage was substituted for the oft-repeated likin dues on foreign goods going up country ; but though the transit pass is nominally a benefit available to all, its action is rendered nugatory by the mandarin, who put every possible difficulty in the way of traders bearing these permits, and, when all opposition proves useless, trace the goods travelling under pass, and extort the full likin duties from the

native merchant to whom they are consigned. It is only recently that this fact has been made evident.

The officials do not now raise any difficulties about the issuing of transit passes, and allow the goods named to pass freely, but the consignee is invariably made to pay, and if he refuses, he is arrested and imprisoned on some frivolous charge. The methods employed in order to bring about this result are exceedingly ingenious. Instances are quoted in well-nigh every trade report published, and the annual publications issued by the Foreign Office teem with the complaints against the corruptness of the mandarin.

The reason for this energetic insistence on the payment of likin becomes evident in the light of the announcement made by no less an authority than Consul Byron Brenan, of Canton, that not more than 30 per cent., on an average, of the likin duties collected find their way into the Imperial Treasury. Nor is this species of dishonesty peculiar to the likin duties. It obtains in every financial operation intrusted to the supervision of the mandarin. Instances might be multiplied indefinitely. To quote one, I turn to the land tax, the most productive throughout the Empire. The impost on cultivated land is levied at the rate of 200 cash a "mow," * which works out at three-quarters of a tael† an acre. The area of the nine agricultural provinces is returned by Sir N. J. Hannen at 400,000,000 acres,

* A "mow" is approximately 806 sq. yards, or one-sixth of an English acre.

† A "tael" is reckoned at 3s. 4d., or six to the £ sterling. It is supposed to represent 1600 "cash." But, owing to the appreciation of copper, the present exchange gives only 1200.

which, at 75 tael cents., should bring in a total of 300,000,000 taels. The actual total sum received at the Board of Customs for land tax during the year 1896—the last available return—was 31,650,000 taels, or less than one-ninth of what was undoubtedly collected.

The greed of the mandarin tax-collector is, however, by no means satisfied by the robbing of his employer. He robs with equal readiness those whom he is supposed to protect. By the existing treaties foreigners are entitled to trade at the free ports without paying any taxes beyond the 5 per cent. duty imposed by the Maritime Customs. This clause is a dead-letter, owing to the unscrupulous ingenuity of the officials. Where white men are scarce and costly, native labour has to be largely relied on, and most of the British firms employ Chinese compradores to trade for them. Immediately such a one takes up his post, a local revenue officer will call on him and instruct him to add 5 per cent. to the price of everything he sells, and to pay the extra money to the mandarin. If the clerk refuses, he is arrested and put in prison. Any action taken by the injured firm has to be referred to Peking, and involves months of delay and heavy loss of trade. It follows, therefore, that the tax is paid, and the merchant is robbed to the tune of 5 per cent., which the mandarin pockets.

In the case of the native customs, fraud is practised to a very large extent, despite the fact that all duties paid are checked by official receipts. The method followed is extremely simple. A merchant importing, say, a hundred gallons of oil, will be allowed to take the

whole quantity through on paying the duty upon eighty and accepting a receipt for the duty upon fifty. In this way the mandarin pockets the duty on thirty gallons, while the importer saves that on twenty. Both are gainers, each having swindled the authorities to the best of his ability.

Nor are the methods of the Chinese tax-collector exhausted by these efforts. When the official sees a chance of a haul he invariably takes it. A fair instance of a very ordinary squeeze was that perpetrated on the owners of a steamer, started last year to run between Fuchow and Shui Kou. The mandarin demanded a fee of 10,000 dollars, under penalty of seizure. There was absolutely no reason for the payment of such a sum, or, indeed, of any sum, but the money was paid. The matter was subsequently inquired into by Consul Allen, of Fuchow, who was informed that the sum was to compensate the junkmen whose living would be interfered with. Mr Allen, in reporting the incident, remarked, "I daresay it may be so entered in the provincial account." Steamboats plying up the open rivers, even between treaty ports, are constantly being thus blackmailed, and as their owners can only choose between payment and endless delays and vexations, the money is always found.

It would be easy to cite instances innumerable of pillage, misappropriation, and fraud on the part of the mandarin class. To anyone who knows China it is a matter of doubt whether the estimate that 30 per cent. of the duties collected reaches the Treasury is not too high. The tendency is for the taxes to increase with-

out in any way benefiting Peking, with the result that the native trade of China is being gradually but surely killed. The very food supplies of the country are disorganised, in order to bring money to the official class. Thus a steamer laden with rice, for, say, Wuhu, will be compelled to put in at Chinkiang, 100 miles down the river, with the object of insuring the transhipment of the cargo and the collection of two duties instead of one, while, during the Japanese war, when food was scarce and famine threatened in the northern provinces, the shipment of rice from the south was forbidden, the reason stated being that it was found that the cargoes might fall into the hands of the Japanese. This alleged reason will not, of course, be for one moment credited, and it is instructing to record the fact that, since that time, it has transpired that a number of the highest officials at Tientsin, men whose paramount duty it was to see to the feeding of the starving people, were concerned in a "corner" in rice, and pursued the course stated in order to inflate prices.

Nor does Chinese officialdom show to greater advantage in its administration of justice. "The workings of the Chinese law courts show that bribery, extortion, and cruel injustice are not merely possible, but easy and common, under the most elaborate system that can be devised."* Juries are non-existent, and the principle of weighing evidence unheard of. Lawyers are unknown. The only principle admitted in a Chinese court is that afforded by precedent, and there are a number of literati who devote

* Holcombe.

themselves to examining records of previous cases, in order to discover a parallel which may assist the magistrate in arriving at a decision. Witnesses are never sworn, it being recognised that it would be useless to swear them, even if there were reason to suppose that the normal Chinaman could appreciate the nature of an oath. Perjury is no crime, it being recognised that a man will lie in any case. The judge endeavours to get at the truth rather by judging the expression and demeanour of those brought before him, than by listening to their statements, and in cases of doubt one or other of the litigants or prisoners—sometimes both—are beaten in open court, or tortured by being suspended by their thumbs, until the desired confession is forthcoming.

The question of the punishments awarded Chinese evil-doers has been dealt with by nearly every writer who has been in China, but, while recognising that many of these are undoubtedly cruel, it is only fair to point out that the more extreme measures are very rarely resorted to, and then only in the case of the worst desperadoes. Such penalties as slicing to death, skinning alive, the use of the wire shirt,* and similar monstrous penalties, are only imposed in the case of crimes such as parricide, and similar extreme villainies. These few exceptions apart, the worst cases of actual torture inflicted are those which occur to prisoners while awaiting trial or sentence in the Chinese jails. Some of

* The wire shirt is a piece of iron netting which is bound so tightly round the body as to cause the victim's flesh to protrude through the mesh. The sufferer is then shaved with a sharp knife, and it is on record that victims have subsequently had salt rubbed into their wounds.

these are too revolting to bear description, and are apparently due merely to the brutality of the petty mandarin.

The most frequently awarded penalty for minor offences is the wearing of the cangue, a square board varying in size and weight, with a hole in the centre the size of a man's neck. The apparatus is made in two pieces, but is padlocked together round the victim's neck. The board projects so as to prevent the wearer's lying down, nor can he feed himself. The weight of these instruments of torture is often such as to tax the endurance of the strongest man. The cangue is worn day and night for periods of from a few days to several months.

Unsatisfactory as is Chinese justice in the main, it has, at least, some good points. It is cheap, necessitating neither the employment of costly counsel nor the payment of exorbitant court fees. It is also easily obtainable. The Chinese proverb has it that "the eye of justice never sleeps," and this claim is certainly borne out in practice. The Hall of Justice is open to the street, and any person having a complaint to make, or a charge to prefer, may go there at any hour, beat the gong, and state his case to the magistrate, who is by law bound to take his seat at once in the judgment chair. Thus, in the matter of justice, as in other things, the Chinese theory has its good points. Its practice, however, is merely contemptible, and well calculated to disgust the unprejudiced observer. And there can be little question but that, until the present educational system, together with its concomitant officialism, is wiped out of existence, the administration of Chinese government will remain as rotten and as corrupt as it is to-day.

STREET SCENE IN PEKIN.

CHAPTER IV.

FOREIGN RELATIONS.

A PERIOD of isolation extending over four thousand years, during which the only incidents of prime importance have been connected with the practical absorption of neighbouring territories, is not a very suitable preparation for an extended intercourse with nations which boast a different civilisation, and are subject to opposite prejudices and beliefs. The natural outcome of uninterrupted national dominance is the development of national conceit, and if in the case of China this has been developed to no ordinary extent, it is only fair to admit that there is ample excuse for its manifestation. With records going back to the birth of history, and dating from nearly 3000 years before the Christian era, China saw the coming of seven separate dynasties before the birth of Christ. And as each ruler succeeded to the throne, the nation grew in solidarity and acquired new strength until, by dint of conquest and absorption, the half of Asia came to acknowledge the suzerainty of the Son of Heaven, and the people of the inner kingdom claimed for themselves the dominion over what was to them the surface of the earth. The system of culture which had become de-

veloped within the limits of the flowery land represented to these people the highest form of social attainment. All outside its influences were uncivilised barbarians, mere savages whose affairs were a matter of interest to the curious only, and whose opinions were resultants of undeveloped intelligence. The rule of several powerful dynasties, notably the Tang, or national line of kings; and the Ming, which endured for more than 600 years; increased the prestige which had always been maintained by the Celestials in the eyes of the dependent states, and added in no small degree to the arrogance and conceit exhibited by the members of the ruling nation; and it has always been the unwillingness of the people to acknowledge the unreason of this attitude of superiority which they have from the earliest times assumed, that has led to the troubles which have cropped up between China and the Western nations with whom she has come into contact.

It was during the reign of Wontsong, the eleventh of the Ming kings, that communications were first opened up between Europe and China. Hitherto the only knowledge possessed by Western nations of the land of Cathay was that derived from the famous work of Marco Polo, the capable Venetian, who visited Peking on two occasions towards the close of the thirteenth century, and was the honoured guest of the Emperor Chitsou, better known as Kublai Khan. Polo's account of China proper is, however, lacking in detail, and though an admirable piece of work from a literary standpoint, serves rather to provoke the

reader's curiosity than to satisfy it. The first European to prosecute a specific mission in China was Don Fernand Perez D'Andrade, a Portuguese officer who sailed in charge of a small squadron in 1517, and on reaching the Canton River was well received by the mandarin. He subsequently visited Peking, where he remained in high favour as the representative of the King of Portugal. The Portuguese, encouraged by the reports received from D'Andrade, sent a second and much larger expedition to China, and unfortunately the crews hastened to make the most of their opportunities by committing various outrages on the natives. This circumstance greatly incensed the Chinese, who communicated with Peking, and the Emperor Wontsong ordered D'Andrade to be immediately arrested. He was put in prison, just before Wontsong died after a reign of sixteen years; and one of the first acts of Chitsong, his successor, was, in 1523, to have the erstwhile ambassador executed.

It was not until the reign of Wanleh, who came to the throne in 1573, that European intercourse became developed to any considerable extent. In no way discouraged by the fate of their ambassador, the Portuguese had retained a foothold in South China, and in 1536 had succeeded in negotiating a settlement in which to erect stores and residences. The spot chosen became known as Macao, and was conveniently situated at the mouth of the Canton River. Before many years had elapsed, the number of Portuguese traders had grown to several hundreds, and a judicious payment to the mandarin of the province of Kwang-

tung secured them the right of trading up the river. The success thus achieved soon became known in the Iberian Peninsula; and Spain, desirous of emulating the achievements of her neighbours, decided to send an expedition to the China seas. Its leaders did not, however, reach the mainland, but established themselves in the Philippine Islands, which they eventually controlled, after massacring the native and Chinese inhabitants;—over 100,000 lives being taken in cold blood; in order to establish Spanish rule on a sound basis—and Manila was captured by General Legaspi in 1571. The English do not seem to have taken any part in the exploitation of China at this period. Besides the Portuguese and a few Dutch who joined them in their commercial enterprises, the only Europeans who appear to have entered China in the 16th century were a band of Roman Catholic missionaries who had been despatched to the East by the Pope with a view to bringing the Chinese within the pale of the Church of Rome. These missionaries seem to have been exceptionally able men, possessed of much useful knowledge which they readily imparted to the Celestials, by whom they were well received, the natives being very glad to avail themselves of the services of the missionaries without exhibiting the slightest intention of being influenced by their religious teaching.

In 1624 the Dutch sent an expedition bent on opening up commercial relations with the Chinese. The expedition duly arrived at Macao, but the Portuguese would not permit its members to land, whereupon

they departed and founded a settlement on the coast of Formosa, which remained for many years, but never attained any conspicuous success.

The year 1634 is memorable from the fact that it witnessed the beginning of British traffic with China. In that year Captain Weddell explored, and partially surveyed, the mouth of the Canton River, and succeeded in making his way as far as Canton. His visit did not lead to any immediate result, but the report which this navigator brought home was largely instrumental in bringing about the subsequent relations between this country and China. The first trade effected was a small purchase of tea, till then unknown, and this reached England in 1660. The attention attracted by this new product from a strange country tended to encourage traders to explore the China seas, and the rapid growth in the business done during the succeeding years served to draw the attention of the East India Company to the possibilities of commerce with China. In 1680, the corporation, at that time the ruler of Hindostan, despatched agents to Canton, and devoted its resources to the development of trade with the Celestials.

The political relations between Russia and China date from 1692. An attempt had been made thirty-six years earlier to obtain recognition from the Emperor Chun-tche for a Russian envoy, and an officer was sent from Siberia to Peking in order to open relations with the court. But the Russian refused to consent to the required Kowtow,* the performance of which was made

* The Kowtow, signifying knock-head from the Chinese Kou-tou, has its origin

a *sine qua non* at any interview with the Son of Heaven, and he was therefore denied an audience, and had to return without having achieved the object of his errand. The Treaty of Nerchinsk, which the Russians were compelled to sign in 1689, and under which a large extent of territory which they had occupied had to be given up to China, made it very desirable that diplomatic relations should be opened up between the two countries in order that the reverse sustained might be counterbalanced. Under the auspices of Peter the Great another attempt to achieve the desired end was made in 1692; and a trusted officer, General Ides, was sent to Peking, but did not succeed in obtaining an audience, so returned the second Russian envoy who had failed at the Chinese Court. After an interval of twenty-six years, the Czar determining to send a more imposing mission, despatched to Peking Captain Ismalieff and M. de Lange, accompanied by Mr Bell, an Englishman who had been in China, and a numerous staff, provided with an autograph letter from the Czar, full of the most friendly expressions and written in nine languages, to insure an understanding of its terms. A very complete and interesting account of this mission is to be found in the journal of M. de Lange, which has been translated into English by Mr Bell.

in an old Persian custom, and appears to have been introduced into China about the 8th century. It does not find a place in the Chinese book of rites, but it is on record that it was performed by the ambassadors who came to Peking from the Court of Huroun al Raschid in 728 A.D. The performance of the Kowtow consists in going down on hands and knees a given number of times, and knocking the forehead on the floor three times on each prostration. The number of prostrations demanded of Lord Macartney was nine.

On reaching Peking the mission was well received, and a house was provided, by special command of the Emperor Khangi, for the accommodation of his honoured guests. The mandarin, however, were not disposed to carry out the Emperor's wishes. The Russians were kept prisoners in the house provided for them,

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which was closed and constantly watched, and they were informed that they would have to perform the Kowtow in the event of an audience being accorded. After some difficulty a direct appeal made to Khangi caused the rigid surveillance to be withdrawn, and the difficulty of the Kowtow was settled by the leading mandarin of the court being sent to receive the Czar's

letter and perform the ceremony of prostration out of respect to its writer. Ismalieff, accordingly, agreed to render a like homage to the Emperor, and he was duly received by Khangi, and by him given permission to leave de Lange at Peking as ambassador from the Czar.

Ismalieff thereupon returned to St Petersburg and reported his success to his master, who, delighted with the result of his mission, decided to cultivate a trade with Peking. A caravan was prepared and despatched across the Gobi Desert to open up commerce with China. But Peter reckoned without the mandarin. As soon as Ismalieff had left, de Lange, the admitted ambassador, was treated as a prisoner. He was under constant espionage, refused audience with the Emperor, and kept at a distance by the officials. And when the caravan arrived outside the capital in 1721, it was refused admission, and had to retrace its steps, while advantage was taken of the illness of Khangi to dismiss de Lange, who was escorted to the frontier with the notification that in future all necessary intercourse would be carried on at the boundary between the two nations.

The reign of Keen Lung, the greatest of the Manchu kings, saw much progress in the relations between China and foreign powers. Coming to the throne in 1735, he ruled for sixty-one years, and retired full of age and honour three years before he died. Keen Lung was the last of the Chinese Emperors who actually ruled over the country. Despite the strength of the corrupt mandarin party, always in

the ascendant at Peking; their ruler, like Khangi his predecessor, had a mind and possessed the strength to insist on his wishes being obeyed. His successors have been personages of a different complexion. In place of a strong will, a clear-head, and an honest desire for their country's good, they have proved to be weaklings, whose whole idea was self-indulgence, and whose sole aim in life was sensuality. For this reason, the reputation of Keen Lung stands out in the bolder relief and is all the more worthy of fame.

An attempt was made by the Portuguese in 1750, by means of an embassy to Peking, to obtain improved facilities for pushing their trade on the Canton River. This embassy did not lead to any great results, though it was accorded a gracious reception, and the costly gifts it conveyed were accepted. The Dutch similarly despatched a mission to Peking five years later, but failed to create an impression on the Emperor or to attain the object of their desires. The relations of Russia with China became about this period somewhat strained. Peter had died about the same time as Khangi, and had been succeeded by Elizabeth, who desired to carry out her father's policy of establishing friendly relations with China. But her efforts were in vain, and the proposal that Keen Lung should send an ambassador to reside at St Petersburg was received with an open rebuff. Despite, however, the uncompromising attitude of the Peking authorities, the trade between the two countries by the caravan route through Kiakhta and the Gobi Desert tended to increase, and, owing to the distance of the frontier from

the capital of Peking, it was allowed to progress without official interference.

An event of great importance in the political history of China occurred in 1763, in which year two Chinese subjects visited Europe and passed some time in the French capital. The experiences of these Celestials were duly transmitted to the east, and served to show the Chinese that their appreciation of the Western powers was a mistaken one, and that the unknown kingdoms from which the so-called outer barbarians came were quite as civilised and even more powerful than their own. Here was a dilemma! The Peking government suddenly learned that it had all along been making itself ridiculous by its treatment of foreigners, and that, far from being outlandish savages, the people of the West were in every sense capable of holding their own against the vain Celestials.

The only course open to the mandarinate, in face of this discovery, was plain. The fact of the actual strength of the "barbarians" must be concealed from the knowledge of the people; and the foreigners must be kept out of the country at all hazards. This discovery had a very marked effect on the relations between China and Europe, and undoubtedly tended to the development of that opposition to Western ideas which has ever since characterised the mandarin.

The growth of British influence in China had during all this time been very slow. Since the arrival of Captain Weddell at Canton in 1634, intercourse had been fitfully carried on, partly by the East India Company which traded from Calcutta, and partly by

vessels sent out by private firms in England. Dealings with the native merchants were, however, heavily handicapped by the rapacity and arrogance of the officials, who, in addition to entertaining a violent prejudice against the traders, were in receipt of constant bribes from the Portuguese, who desired that the trade with Canton should rest exclusively in their hands. Various attempts were made to approach the government at Peking, in the belief that it would be preferable to deal with the high officials of the capital rather than with the irresponsible mandarins at Canton, but the Viceroy would not listen to the proposal, and the relations between the countries interested continued to be one of mutual suspicion and distrust.

This was the position of affairs when the British Government decided to make an attempt to open up diplomatic relations with the Emperor of China, and Lord Macartney was chosen to conduct a special embassy to Peking with that object. Considerable pains were taken with the arrangements. Interpreters were provided. Costly presents were purchased. Two of the finest vessels afloat were selected to convey the mission, and Lord Macartney with a brilliant suite left Portsmouth early in September 1792, reaching the forts at the mouth of the Peiho in the August following. His reception by the Chinese was gratifying. News of the coming of an embassy from England had preceded his arrival, and Keen Lung had issued instructions that the ambassador should be received with honour. Accordingly, on arrival at the Peiho, Lord Macartney was welcomed

by the Viceroy of Chili, who went on board the British ships accompanied by a number of mandarin, and announced his intention of escorting the ambassador up the river. At Tientsin the visitor was received with a formal military salute, this being the first occasion on which so great an honour had been granted to a foreigner. And so the embassy moved on towards Peking, to find that the Emperor was away at his hunting lodge at Jehol. Some delay occurred pending the receipt of instructions, but after an interval of a few days, a message came from Keen Lung inviting the ambassador to pay him a visit forthwith. At this point it became evident that the mandarin were strongly opposed to the honour about to be conferred on the "barbarian" ambassador. All sorts of difficulties were invented with the object of averting the proposed visit, and especial stress was laid upon the humiliation which Lord Macartney would be expected to undergo when in the light of the presence of the Son of Heaven. The ambassador replied to all the reasons which were urged, that he had been invited to visit the Emperor, and he would go, and that he would pay him the same respect as that which he paid to his own sovereign, but that he would not perform the Kowtow or prostrate himself, as such observances would be unworthy of his position as representing the King of England.

Lord Macartney thereupon proceeded to Jehol in an English carriage, attended by his suite, and surrounded by the guard allotted him. On arrival, he was informed that notwithstanding his refusal to perform the

Kowtow the Emperor had decided to receive him, and the interview took place in the gardens of the palace. A second audience was also accorded, when Lord Macartney was bidden to a banquet at which Keen Lung presided in person, and even filled a glass of wine, which he handed to his guest. But beyond an expression of "friendly sentiments to His Britannic Majesty," no direct results were attained, and no opportunity was afforded for discussing the political or the commercial relations between the two countries. Keen Lung was old, and the influence of his officers of state antagonistic. The cordiality of the reception accorded to the barbarian ambassador highly incensed the hangers-on of the court, and it was determined to get rid of the unwelcome visitor with as little delay as possible.

On leaving Peking, Lord Macartney proceeded overland to Canton, where he re-embarked for England. His journey was not a pleasant one, for he was repeatedly annoyed by the unfriendly attitude and uncouth behaviour of the mandarin at the various places he passed through on the way, but he reached the south safely, and returned home with little to report, beyond the fact that he had been accorded a friendly reception by the Emperor without obtaining any of the facilities which it was hoped his mission would secure.

The return of Lord Macartney brings the record of the foreign relations of China during the 18th century to a close, and I propose to deal with the more important incidents which have since transpired in the

separate chapters devoted to a consideration of the political situation existing between China and the powers. I have, however, said enough to explain the strong antipathy exhibited by the mandarin to the spread of foreign intercourse, an antipathy which, bred of ignorance and conceit, has been strengthened by distrust and fear. The efforts of the councillors of Keen Lung, the strong willed, to prevent the reception of Lord Macartney, failed, and their failure was in all probability largely due to the vigour with which the opposition was urged, an opposition which served only to whet the intelligent curiosity of the monarch. But measures which proved inefficient in the case of Keen Lung were ample in the case of his successor, and there can be little question but that, had Lord Amherst proved more pliable than he did, the mandarin who ruled the court would have found means to prevent the desired audience taking place, or would have inflicted a series of indignities on the ambassador of Great Britain. The Emperors Taoukwang, Hienfung, and Tungche were the merest tools in the hands of their ministers. The last named proved himself, during the few years of his life, an incompetent weakling and incorrigible debauchee, and his death, which is supposed to have been due to poison administered by his own relatives, did not cause a blank in history which was at all difficult to fill. His successor, Kwangsu, the reigning emperor, a young man of moderate promise, is said to be entirely in the hands of the woman who acted as regent until he came of age. He succeeded to the throne on the death of Tungche, in 1875, being at the

time but three years of age. The government was thereupon placed in the hands of the Empress Tsi Thsi, widow of the Emperor Hienfung, and the ex-concubine Tsi An, both extremely capable, if somewhat unscrupulous women, and their rule was supported by the advice and assistance of Prince Kung, uncle of the Emperor and a Chinaman of exceptional enlightenment.

The recent death of this prince has resulted in an accession of influence to the Dowager Empress, who is to-day believed to be the real ruler of China, and it is doubtless largely due to her initiative, aided probably by the better appreciation of the true status of foreign powers which is due to increased political and commercial intercourse, that the question of diplomatic relations, and more especially that of the right of audience, has been put on a more satisfactory footing than has ever before been arrived at.

It is impossible to review the relations between the Court of China and the representatives of foreign powers without being struck by the disproportionate importance which has always been attached by the Chinese to the observance of certain forms and ceremonies. The question of the performance of the Kowtow has disturbed the diplomatic relations with various rulers for more than two centuries, while the fiction of regarding every accredited ambassador as a tribute-bearer, was kept up to within a very few years ago.

The reception of tribute is a custom which was, till recently, inseparable in the Chinese idea from the most trifling intercourse with foreign nations. Shut

out from the reach of Western ideas, China had always been an empire boastful of its exclusiveness and arrogant over its predominance among its neighbours. A series of wars and fruitless rebellions had brought the bordering territories on every side within its suzerainty, and the independence of these was guaranteed by the Chinese rulers in return for the rendering of a periodical tribute sent to Peking with much display and ceremony. The intervals at which this tribute was paid varied in each case, as did also the value represented. Thus it came about that Burma sent tribute once in ten years, Nepaul once in five, Annam every fourth year, and Korea annually. Tibet, Siam, and the Liuchu Islands all remitted tribute to the Son of Heaven, and their contributions were at all times carefully scanned with a view to detecting any deficiency or departure from recognised custom. It will be readily understood that the homage thus rendered by neighbouring countries was largely responsible for the intense conceit which marks the Chinese character. All oriental rulers are pretentious, but no Asiatic monarch has received such adulation as the Son of Heaven, and it is only reasonable to make allowances for the natural result of the homage which has been accorded him.

The early envoys who reached Peking appear to have readily complied with the requirements of the court. The missions which reached China in the 17th century from the Dutch and Portuguese performed the Kowtow without objection, as did also the papal mission which visited Khangi in 1720; and

it is interesting to note that the ceremonial observed by these was precisely similar to that prescribed for tribute-bearers from dependent states. There is a very full and complete list of regulations for the reception of tributary envoys at the Court of Peking, which were some years ago translated by Mr G. Jamieson, our able Consul-General at Shanghai, and from this I quote the following instructions :—

After the officers of the court have finished their ceremonial, the envoys will be conducted to the open courtyard, where they will be placed at the foot of the row of officials on the west side. At the word of command they will kneel and Kowtow nine times. His Majesty will ask, in a soothing manner, after their welfare. The president of the Board will communicate the question to the interpreter, who will pass it on to the chief envoy. The envoy will reply, the interpreter will translate the reply to the president, and the president will report it to his Majesty. The ceremony being ended, they will retire.

It is interesting to note how the decision of Lord Macartney triumphed over the above regulations. We are fortunately able to follow the precise details of the actual ceremonial performed by the first British ambassador to the Court of Peking, and I quote the following particulars from Sir George Staunton* :—

The Emperor, on his entrance to the tent, mounted the throne by the front steps consecrated to his use alone. The chief minister and two of the principal persons of the household were close to him, and always spoke to him upon their knees. The princes of his family, the tributaries, and great officers of state being already arranged in their respective places in the tent, the president of the Board of Rites conducted Lord Macartney, who was attended by his

* *An authentic account of an embassy from the King of Great Britain to the Emperor of China.* 1797.

page and Chinese interpreter, near to the foot of the throne. The ambassador, instructed by the president, held the large and magnificent square box of gold, adorned with jewels, in which was inclosed his Majesty's letter to the Emperor, between both hands, lifted above his head, and in that manner ascending the few steps that led to the throne, and, bending on one knee, presented the box with a short address to his Imperial Majesty, who, graciously receiving the same with his own hands, placed it by his side, and expressed, in a few courteous words, pleasure at the reception of the embassy and the presents.

It will be gathered from the above authentic detail that the whole ceremonial was that suitable to the reception of tribute from a vassal state, and, if any proof of this suspicion were needed, it would be supplied by the fact, which was unfortunately not discovered until after the event, that the banners carried before Lord Macartney throughout his progress from the mouth of the Pei Ho to Peking, bore the inscription "Tribute Bearer," so as to prevent the populace crediting any rumour of diplomatic relations having been opened up with a nation of barbarians.

The embassy of the Dutch East India Company, which found its way to Peking in 1795, has been chronicled by André Van Braam,* and presents a marked contrast to the bearing of Lord Macartney only two years before. The emissaries were subjected to every indignity the mandarin could invent, and, although accorded an audience by the Emperor, whose sixtieth anniversary they had ostensibly come to celebrate, they were treated with less distinction

* *Authentic account of the embassy of the Dutch East India Company in the years 1794 and 1795.*

than was accorded to the tribute-bearer from a third-rate state.

The second mission sent by Great Britain to Peking was due to the initiative of George IV., who despatched Lord Amherst to the Emperor Kiaking, with the object of obtaining, if possible, a commercial treaty between the two countries. The character of Lord Amherst appears to have differed as greatly from that of Lord Macartney as did that of Kiaking from his predecessor, Keen Lung. Lord Amherst left England 8th February 1816, and arrived at Tientsin in due course, to find the mandarin opposed to his mission, and insistent on his performing the Kowtow, which, in the case of his predecessor, had been excused. Indeed, they refused even to rest content with a Kowtow before the Emperor in person, but required the British Ambassador to prostrate himself before a yellow covered table, with a dish of incense on it, as being symbolic of the Imperial presence.* Lord Amherst remained firm in his refusal to Kowtow either before the Emperor or his suggestion, and after much discussion the officials gave in, and the embassy was conveyed in boats, each carrying the "tribute bearing" flag to Tung Chow, where the question of the Kowtow was again raised, the mandarin going the length of threatening, in the event of his refusal, to send the ambassador out of the empire without seeing the Emperor at all. To this Lord Amherst replied that he was quite willing to leave, and, eventually, the officers agreed to

* *Narrative of Lord Amherst's Embassy to the Court of Peking*, by Clarke Abel, Chief Medical Officer, etc., 1818.

waive the question. The party were then conveyed to Yuen ming yuen, where the Emperor was staying, arriving at early dawn. Lord Amherst was immediately informed that the Emperor would receive him forthwith. Fatigued by his long journey, and probably irritated by the endless wrangling in which he had been concerned ever since he had arrived at Tientsin, the ambassador refused to enter the Emperor's presence until he had enjoyed some rest and refreshment, and he forthwith threw himself on a bench in search of repose. The Chinese, however, would take no denial. They stated that the Emperor was eager and ready to receive the British Ambassador, and urged his immediate compliance with his commands. But Lord Amherst refused, and when the Duke Ho took him by the arm, and endeavoured to lead him out, he became angry, and declared that force alone should carry him into the Imperial presence. Convinced at last that it would be useless to continue persuading the irritable ambassador, the councillors left him and proceeded to report to the Emperor. The exact statement made by the mandarin is, of course, not known. Doubtless it did not err on the side of leniency towards Lord Amherst. The result came a few hours after in a message to the effect that "The Emperor, incensed at the ambassador's refusal to visit him, had commanded our immediate departure." *

Lord Amherst's mission thus came to an end, without having achieved anything beyond supplying further evidence of the irreconcilable attitude of the

* Abel, *Narrative*, etc.

mandarin, and the overweening conceit with which the superiority of the Chinese Court is maintained by the Celestials.

The third mission sent by this country to Peking, that of Lord Elgin in 1860, proved entirely abortive, owing to the stupidity of the British plenipotentiary, and need not be more than referred to here. On the occupation of Peking by the allies, charged with enforcing the terms of the Treaty of Tientsin, the Emperor Hienfung fled to Jehol, and, refusing to return even after the close of the war, he died in seclusion without coming into contact with the outer barbarians, who had in March 1861 succeeded in establishing, after many years of striving, an embassy at Peking. The establishment of the Tsungli Yamen marked the commencement of direct official intercourse with foreign states; but Hienfung was succeeded by his infant son Tungche, and for some years no further steps could be taken with a view to reviving the great audience question. The coming of age of the young Emperor in 1872 was regarded as a fitting opportunity to discuss the point, and a joint note was transmitted to the newly constituted Board of Foreign Affairs by the representatives of all the Powers proposing to offer their congratulations to the young Emperor on the achievement of his majority. Nothing happened for awhile. Tungche took over the helm of state in February 1873, and, four months later, the official announcement of the Emperor's intention of receiving the representatives of foreign powers appeared in the *Peking Gazette*. The audience took place on the 29th

June, in the Purple Pavilion of the Palace at Peking. A full account of this momentous event in the records of China was written by Sir Thomas Wade,* and it forms most entertaining reading.

The ministers, including the representatives of Great Britain, France, Russia, the United States, and Japan, met at the north gate of the Palace grounds, and were conducted in their state chairs by a mandarin to the inner gate, where the chairs were left; and the visitors were received by Wensiang, the Grand Secretary, Prince Kung, and the members of the Tsungli Yamen. Thence the party were escorted to the Palace of Reasonableness, where refreshments were served, and, after a wait of an hour's duration, the company moved on to a large tent pitched to the westward of the Purple Pavilion, where the audience was to take place. Another wait of more than an hour occurred, the reason of the delay being stated, with profuse apologies, to be the receipt of important despatches which required the Emperor's attention. At last the ministers were summoned to the presence, and proceeded to enter the Pavilion by the western steps. The interior was divided into sections by wooden pillars, the Emperor being seated on a throne placed on the north side of the hall. The visitors advanced to a long yellow table, placed some twelve paces from the throne, and bowed. The Emperor was seated, Manchu fashion, with legs crossed under him, with Prince Kung on his left, and surrounded by a number of great officials. An address, which had

* *Blue Book*, China, No. 1, 1874.

been specially prepared for the occasion, was read in French by General Vlangaly, the *doyen* of the diplomatists present, and a Chinese translation was immediately read by M. Bismarck, Chinese secretary of the German Legation, who attended as interpreter. (The German minister was not present, owing to his being absent from Peking on leave at the time.) On hearing the address read, the Emperor made a slight bow in acknowledgment, and Prince Kung then fell upon both knees at the foot of the throne, and the Emperor spoke a few words to him in Manchu. The Prince then rose, and, descending the steps from the throne, informed the ministers that His Majesty had declared that the address had been received. The Prince then returned to his former post, and again fell upon his knees, and the whispered converse with the Emperor was resumed. Again descending the steps, Prince Kung informed those present that His Majesty had expressed a hope that the respective rulers represented were in good health, and trusted that foreign affairs might be satisfactorily arranged between the ministers and the Tsungli Yamen. This brought the audience, which had lasted about five minutes, to a close, and the ambassadors were conducted back to their chairs by the ministers of the Yamen.

It was noticed at the time that the audience thus accorded did not take place within the precincts of the palace, but in a separate building in the extensive grounds, and considerable attention was attracted to the proclamation issued, which purported to give an account of the reception, in which statements entirely

contrary to fact were made, and it was alleged that the ministers were so overwhelmed by the sight of the Son of Heaven that they trembled from head to foot. A counter manifesto, comprising a correct account of what did actually occur, was accordingly circulated by the ambassadors, and the incident closed.

Eighteen months after this noteworthy event Tungche died, and the throne of China once more had for its occupant an infant. But those responsible for the carrying on of the Government appear to have acquired a sudden accession of common-sense, for, in 1877, Quo Ta Zahn, a mandarin of rank, was appointed residential minister in London, where he arrived in November, and so quickly did he take to the European idea, that in the June following he gave an evening reception to London society.

The present Emperor Kwangsu came of age in 1889, and an intimation, similar to that which had been conveyed on a similar occasion to his predecessor, was duly presented to the Tsungli Yamen by the foreign ministers in Peking. The request for an audience was not immediately responded to, but, in December 1890, there appeared in the *Peking Gazette* an edict decreeing that an audience would be granted to the foreign representatives in China, and that this should be repeated every year, "in order to show my desire to treat with honour all the ministers of the foreign powers resident in Peking." It was further ordered that, on the day following each audience, a banquet should be given at the Tsungli Yamen to

the foreign representatives, whether permanent or temporary.

Notwithstanding the comparative friendliness of this edict, the function which ensued left much to be desired, though it was certainly an improvement on that which had preceded it seven years before. The ministers were received singly instead of in a body, but they were not permitted to present their letters of credence, as had been the case in 1873. On this occasion Prince Ching, who acted as High Chamberlain, took the letters and laid them in front of the Emperor. In other respects the proceedings were similar to those already referred to. The audience took place in a building known as the Tsu Kwang Ko, used for the reception of the tribute-bearers coming from Korea and Annam, notwithstanding that the ministers had specially requested to be received in the palace itself.

Accordingly a conference was held by those most concerned, and it was decided not to attend any more receptions in similar outbuildings, and, in consequence of this decision, the New Year's audience did not take place the following year. When Sir Nicholas O'Connor arrived at Peking, in January 1893, he was granted an audience for the purpose of presenting his credentials in another building known as the Cheng Kwang Tien, which had never been used for the purpose of receiving inferior persons, but the arrangement was regarded as unsatisfactory by the other ministers, and neither those of France or Russia would consent to attend a reception there.

After withstanding for many years this knocking at the gate, the palace authorities finally decided in 1894 to admit the "barbarian" ambassadors within the sacred portals. On the 12th November in that year the seven European ministers then in Peking were received in the Wen Hua Tien, a portion of the palace itself, the ceremonial observed being identical with that followed on previous occasions. Since then a few slight changes have been introduced into the order of proceedings, and the following account was written by a gentleman who was attached to one of the embassy escorts at the reception held by the Emperor at the beginning of the present year * :—

The soldiers kept the mob at a respectful distance from the vehicles—gorgeous Sedan chairs, in which the visitors were borne—which were carried as near as possible to the Throne Chamber, whence over the inner court the way was made clean by strips of carpet composed of camel hair and cotton. Some fifteen minutes were occupied by the passage from the embassies to the Gate of Flowers, which is the entrance to the Forbidden City—where dwell the Son of Heaven himself and his eunuchs. A few minutes more brought the Sedan chairs to a second Gate of Flowers, some thirty feet thick, through which the gigantic Royal Court could be seen with its yellow roofed buildings. At the north-eastern corner of this palace is the "Hall of Strength," where the Emperor pursues his studies, which include, a rumour runs, amongst other subjects, the English tongue. Some hundred steps from the Gate of Flowers stands a third high wall, behind which are said to be situated the Secret Chambers of the Emperor as well as the quarters of his three to four thousand concubines. No European has ever passed beyond this wall, in front of which is a moat some 30 feet wide and 100 long. The way to the reception hall led through the "Hall for the Cultivation of the Heart and the Ennoblement of the Tempera-

* 1898.

ment." There the ambassadors were met by their old friend Li Hung Chang, as well as by the uncle of the Emperor, Prince Kung, Prince Tsing, and the members of the State Council, all in their finest clothes. After about half-an-hour of waiting, the ambassadors, headed by Colonel Denby, the representative of the United States, were conducted through antique passages into the awful presence of the ruler.

The Son of Heaven sat upon a raised platform led up to by three flights of five steps each, of which the middle flight was broader and statelier than the other two. Red cloth overhung with yellow covered the stairs as well as the table, which hid the lower half of the Celestial being's body from the sacrilegious gaze of the representatives of the Powers. To the right and left of the monarch stood motionless and corpse-like two Manchurian princes. His Majesty the Emperor Kwangsu, who looks somewhat older than he is, gazed shyly at the ambassadors with tired eyes, into which the aid of opium or morphia had imparted for this most trying day an artificial brilliance. A sad, depressed, somewhat childish smile played about his mouth. The lips open, several long, badly-preserved yellow teeth protrude; whilst the hollows of the cheeks indicate the lack of a good many masticators. A face which inspires neither sympathy nor aversion, but simply a feeling of indifference—without any capacity, used up, half dead—such was my impression of Kwangsu. He appeared to take no interest in the scene going on before him, the whole proceedings seemed incomprehensible to him. After gazing at a distance of three paces for a quarter of an hour at the face of this ruler over millions of men, a feeling of compassion for him overcame me.

Colonel Denby recited, amidst deathly silence, a speech composed in English. The text had been previously communicated to Prince Kung, who now painfully mounted the steps upon the right, and lying prostrate before the Emperor interpreted the address in the Manchu tongue. The Son of Heaven lisped a few indistinguishable words in reply; Prince Kung translated these, and the interpreter of the Russian embassy rendered them back in faulty French. Prince Kung then crept backwards from the throne; the visitors retired three steps, and with their faces turned towards the Emperorleft the hall.

The final step in this long drawn out progress was taken on the 15th May last, when the Emperor received Prince Henry of Prussia at the Summer Palace, and subsequently himself returned the visit. The Emperor, who was supported by the Empress Dowager at both functions, appeared highly nervous, but his self-possession became restored when Prince Henry entered into a lengthy conversation with him, the Emperor becoming apparently interested and less self-conscious. The formality, the first of its kind, passed off with great *éclat*, and marks an era in Chinese history, being a concession of the right of the relatives of foreign monarchs to approach the Son of Heaven on equal terms. An interesting feature in the reception was the announcement made by the Dowager Empress, in response to a suggestion by Prince Henry, that she would arrange to hold a State Drawing-Room at which the European ladies resident in Peking would be received.

One would suppose that the gradual advance which has taken place in intercourse with foreign representatives would tend to bring about a closer regard for those amenities which mark the conduct of all western nations towards the Chinese. But this has not been the case, and even to-day with native ambassadors in most of the European capitals, and ample opportunities for arriving at an appreciation of western manners and customs, the wiles of Chinese diplomacy remain too strong for the sanctity of Chinese promises, and undertakings are grudgingly given to be promptly disregarded or disavowed. The operation of various clauses in the

different treaties which have been arrived at between Great Britain and China has been delayed, and in some instances concessions promised have never been given effect to, and the foreign business of the country is placed in the hands of the Tsungli Yamen, a board which was specially created for the purpose in January 1861, but has been not inaptly termed the bureau for the prevention of business. It is with the eleven members of this Board that the representatives of the foreign powers at Peking have to deal, and their methods are such as to drive the diplomatist unversed in the Chinese idea to the verge of desperation. Speaking of the members of the Yamen in 1884, the then British Minister at Peking, Sir Harry Parkes, who possessed a more intimate knowledge of the Chinese character than any other before or since, wrote :—

They delight in engaging in correspondence. You gain nothing by giving them the opportunity of doing so, and perhaps less by your other alternative, that of going to the Yamen and having a discussion with eight or ten men who all like to speak at once, and who, when refuted, just repeat all they have said before. In some respects it is a question of physical endurance, and if you are not in good condition, the struggle is trying.*

Another acute observer describes the Tsungli Yamen in a newspaper article as follows :—

In this war of resistance to the legal demands of the foreign legations, the Chinese mainly rely on two potent allies, time and fatigue. The Chinese ministers are many, the foreigner is one. When they speak, they all speak at once. The foreign ministers' lips begin to grow pale, and other signs of exhaustion warn the courageous ones that it is time to shout louder if haply they may stun their auditor

* Letter to Mr H. S. Wilkinson, August 10th, 1884.

with sheer noise. Some of the ministers go but seldom to the Yamen, intrusting their routine business to their interpreters or dragomen, who, being mostly in the prime of life, are better able to support the rigour of the Yamen work.*

The only successful method of dealing with these tactics is to treat the Yamen on their own system, and this has been done on more than one occasion with good result. The representative of a foreign power avoids all reference to the business in view. He discusses the weather, the harvest, the health of the mandarin, and the excellence of the refreshments which are provided. After two or three hours of this fooling, the Chinese diplomatists plead other engagements, and the schemer promptly rises and announces his intention of returning on the morrow. The next day sees the process repeated, and these tactics are continued until the Yamen, thoroughly weary of it all, themselves introduce the subject which it is desired to discuss, and finally accord all that is desired in order to get rid of their interlocutor.

It is, indeed, doubtful whether there exists in all the world a more difficult body of men with whom to deal than the members of the Chinese Board of Foreign Affairs. Whether a better time is coming for the patient emissaries of European States is a matter of opinion, but, however modified the position may become in the future, the past presents a record of difficulty, inertness, and tacit opposition, which it would be hard to beat.

* *Times*, 12th September 1884.

THE RIVER FRONT, SHANGHAI.

CHAPTER V.

THE BRITISH RECORD.

To the Treaty of Tientsin.

The record of British interests in China dates from the beginning of the 17th century, when, following the example set by the Portuguese, the Spaniards, and the Dutch, English merchants began to turn their attention to the Far East and its trade possibilities. In 1634 an expedition set sail for China under the command of Captain Weddell, who earned the distinction of navigating and surveying the mouth of the Canton River. China was at that time in the throes of the Manchu conquest, and was strongly opposed to entering into intercourse with people from strange lands. When Captain Weddell reached Canton, his arrival was resented; the people, acting under instructions from the mandarin, refused to allow the strangers to land, and it was only after having taken the city by assault that the expedition was able to open communications with the natives. The result of the intercourse thus initiated, was the beginning of a trade with the province of Kwangtung, and the introduction of tea, till then an unknown beverage, into England.

The opening of commercial relations with the Celestial Empire did not immediately bring about any considerable trade with this country. Its most important result may be said to have been the suggestion of China as a suitable sphere for the labours of Christian missionaries, who promptly set out with the aim of proselytising the Buddhist and Pagan Chinese. The influence brought to bear on the Chinese by the missionaries, the Jesuits more especially, was considerable, and to it was due the publication of the edict, promulgated by the Emperor Kanghi in 1692, which accorded the right of residence, and freedom of intercourse with the people to the missionaries in China. Kanghi was, throughout his reign, a firm friend of the Christian visitors to China, and on one occasion he placed on record his opinion of the foreigners with whom he had come into contact, in language which has survived, and which may with advantage be quoted to-day :

"Europeans have always served me with zeal and affection. There are many Chinese who distrust you, but, as for myself, I am so fully convinced of your uprightness and good faith that I publicly declare that you are deserving of every trust and confidence."

The reign of this enlightened ruler witnessed many innovations which his predecessors would have scorned. In 1688 he had agreed, after a year's negotiation, to the first treaty ever made with a foreign power—that which was duly signed at Nerchinsk between Russia and China—but the Emperor passed away in 1722 without having come into direct intercourse with the

British, nor was it till seventy years later that the first British Embassy arrived at Peking.

During this lengthy interval relations between the Chinese and the British continued to be more or less strained. The people of the South were a jealous race and keenly resented the intrusion of foreigners, but they were made to suffer for every attempt to oust them. They also learned of British prowess in other parts of Asia, news of our dealings in India having penetrated into the districts on the Si Kiang, and this knowledge tended to decrease the contempt which had always been exhibited towards the visitors by the Chinese. Among the articles of trade which found their way into China during this period, the most important, both in quantity and value, was Indian opium, brought by the ships of the East India Company, which began its operations in China in 1680. The drug was not a novelty to the Chinese. It had been cultivated in various parts of China from a very early period, but the imported article was superior, both in quality and manufacture, to the native, and the Indian product found eager purchasers at good prices. In 1767 the import of Indian opium reached a total of 1000 chests, the value of each averaging little under £200, and the opium traffic at Canton, then the only Chinese port open to foreign trade, exceeded in value all the other imports added together.

In the year 1792, struck by the growing importance of the trade with China, and desirous of obtaining the opening of other seaports to foreign trade, William Pitt, at that time premier of England, decided to

despatch an envoy to China to seek an audience with the Emperor, and open up diplomatic relations between the two countries. The choice fell upon Lord Macartney, who proceeded to Peking and was accorded an audience with Keen Lung, as has been related in a previous chapter.

The results of Lord Macartney's mission were, however, illusory. Despite the favourable reception he received at Peking and the gracious expressions of goodwill vouchsafed by the Emperor, no diminution followed of the difficulties under which foreign trade had been carried on. Indeed, the bearing of the Cantonese, instead of becoming more friendly, appeared to grow more antagonistic after the return of Lord Macartney than it was before, and this fact was the more disappointing, when viewed by the light of that knowledge of the country, which had been the result of personal observation by the members of our mission. An additional cause of irritation was the promulgation by the viceroy of Canton in 1800 of an edict forbidding the importation of opium, the real object of the decree being the crippling of British trade in China and the exclusion of foreigners from Chinese territory.

The strained relations which ensued between the British traders and the Cantonese was so great as to render the continuance of trade on the west river difficult if not impossible, and, in order to secure for the British merchants a base convenient to their market, the British seized Macao, which, while still nominally in the hands of the Portuguese, had sunk to the position of a derelict territory.

The decree which suspended the trade in opium was soon discovered to be merely a formal protest, and the traffic continued unabated. Rumours of the profits obtained had spread around the world, and a keen competition for the trade of Canton arose between the British, French and American merchants, who flocked to the Far East in search of new markets and speedy fortunes. Trade was carried on in face of many difficulties, indeed, it could only be sustained by dint of frequent and liberal bribes to the mandarin, who repeatedly blackmailed their visitors under the threat of forbidding all communication. It was with a view to improving the position of the merchants at Canton that the British Government determined, in 1805, to send a letter to the Chinese Emperor, in the hope of adding to the good effect which the reception of Lord Macartney in 1793 had been expected to produce at Peking. In order to increase the chances of success, it was, very unwisely, decided to send a costly present to Sung Tajin, one of the leading mandarin at the Emperor's court, in the hope that the bribe would interest that minister in the British cause. On arrival in China, the bearers of the letter and gift were refused an audience, and were told that the sending of a present to a Chinese minister by a foreign ruler was an insult. The gift was accordingly returned, and with it a very offensive letter from Kiaking to George III., which, for a time at least, brought to a close the friendly relations between the two countries.

Five years later an Englishman, Thomas Manning

by name, who, besides being an experienced traveller, possessed a knowledge of colloquial Chinese, went to China, with the object of exploring the country and in the hope that he might be granted an audience by the Emperor. He was doomed to disappointment. All his attempts to penetrate into the interior from Canton failed, and he returned to India, whence he succeeded in reaching Lhassa, in Tibet, in 1812.*

Disheartened by these repeated failures, the British decided to try the effect of another official mission to Peking, in the hope that the ceremonious pomp of an accredited envoy might attract more favourable notice than had been accorded to individuals. Lord Amherst was the ambassador selected by Lord Liverpool, and he left England in 1816 bent on conciliating the Son of Heaven. The incidents of the second British mission to China have been recorded in a previous chapter, and it will be remembered that Lord Amherst returned home without having achieved the object of his errand.

The failure of this mission did not tend to improve the treatment experienced by British traders in China. The relations with the mandarin at Canton continued strained, and the arrogance of the officials increased. In 1821, the shore boat belonging to a British warship was openly attacked and a number of sailors were injured, but no satisfaction could be obtained, and the imposts exacted by the officials steadily increased. No foreigners were allowed to trade with Canton without

* *Journey of Thomas Manning to Lhassa in* 1811–12. Edited by Clements R. Markham, C.B., F.R.S.

a licence, which was charged for at a prohibitive rate, and only men were permitted to land. The families of the merchants trading up the river were compelled to remain at Macao. These disabilities were partially removed in 1830, and shortly afterwards it was decided not to renew the East India Company's Chinese Charter, which was about to expire, but to leave the development of Chinese commerce to British merchants, whose interests were to be protected by a resident superintendent of the trade with China. The company's charter duly expired in 1834, when Lord Napier took up the duties of British superintendent. The change was important and brought about an entirely new situation. The duties which now devolved on Lord Napier were to protect and foster trade at Canton, to endeavour to obtain markets in other parts of China, and to seek an opportunity of establishing direct communication with the court at Peking. The superintendent was further instructed to deal direct with the viceroy of Kwangtung and not with the mandarin who might happen to be stationed at Canton. It will thus be seen that Lord Napier had a series of very important duties to perform, and the conduct of the British emissary was, at the very outset, in such contrast to that which had characterised the agents of the East India Company as to attract the immediate suspicion of the Chinese.

Lord Napier reached Canton in July 1834. He promptly announced his arrival in a letter which he addressed to the viceroy, but which the mandarin refused to forward. They would not, in fact, hold

any converse with him, and produced an order from the viceroy, forbidding his entry into the city and commanding him to return to Macao. Lord Napier naturally refused to obey this behest, and proceeded to the English "factory" at Canton, to find that all intercourse between the English and Chinese had been interdicted.

The position was rapidly becoming acute. The Chinese were determined to expel the unwelcome foreigners from the country, while the British exhibited a dogged determination to remain. No suspicion of the real strength of the English appears to have crossed the Celestial mind. The viceroy had every confidence in himself, and felt that he only had to give the word for the "barbarians" to be driven into the sea. All he required was a suitable excuse, sufficient to justify any course he might take when his action should be reported to the central government.

The desired justification was supplied by the large export of silver, which had been in progress for more than ten years, during which period silver currency to an enormous amount had left the country in exchange for imports. To prohibit the exportation of silver would be useless, since the people would claim the right of expending their treasure as they pleased; the drain continued, and it occurred to the viceroy that if not stayed it would ere long deplete the national treasury. As it would have been futile to lay an embargo on the silver itself, it was evident that some other means must be sought by which to achieve the end in view, and, as it was believed that the bulk of

the bullion exported went in payment for the opium which came into the country from India, the mandarin determined to stop the importation of the drug. There can be little doubt but that, in deciding on this course, the viceroy was fully alive to the moral argument, which could be brought to bear upon the prohibition of opium. To prevent the importation of the drug would in no way inconvenience the consumer, as ample supplies were even then raised in China, the only difference between the Chinese and the Indian article being one of quality. But the use of opium, while it was being indulged in almost universally, was habitually inveighed against on the ground of its use being injurious and demoralising, and on this plea every possible difficulty was put in the way both of the merchants and the superintendent of trade, who made repeated efforts to obtain an interview with the viceroy, but without success. He appealed and fumed, reasoned and abused in turn, and finally issued a notification containing threats as to the penalties he would enforce, in the event of the mandarin remaining obdurate. The only result of this action was the imposition of further restrictions on foreign trade, the withdrawal of all natives from British service, and the closing of the river to British ships; whereupon Lord Napier, weary and disheartened, retired from Canton and went to Macao, where he died shortly afterwards.

The Chinese, finding themselves masters of the situation, consented to renew their trade intercourse with the merchants, but refused to recognise the superintendent of trade, and prohibited the approach of foreign

warships. Captain Elliot, who was appointed to succeed Lord Napier, was accordingly compelled to request permission to reside at Canton, not as a government official but as a sort of harbour superintendent, charged with the control of sailors and merchandise. His application was granted on the condition that he should abide by all the regulations, and should not rank above a supercargo. The death of Loo, the viceroy of Kwang-tung, and the appointment of Lin Tsisoo to succeed him, proved to be events of the first importance to the British in China. From the outset, Lin proved himself to be even more antagonistic to the British than was his predecessor. Lin entered on his duties with the determination to drive the foreigner out of China, and he was supported in his views by instructions from Peking (whither an account of the recent troubles had been despatched), to inquire into the relations existing between the foreign merchants and the Chinese, and to suggest a remedy for the drain upon silver.

Captain Elliot had not prospered in his mission at Canton. He had frequent troubles with the mandarin, and, finally, was impelled to follow Lord Napier's example and retire to Macao, whence he sent a report home, asking for the despatch of some ships. Several men-of-war arrived at Macao at the close of 1838, and Captain Elliot returned to Canton, where he found the opium question still to the fore, and replied to a communication from the mandarin, by issuing a notice warning all British subjects to refrain from the opium trade. He stated that he would not interfere even if the Chinese Government were to confiscate any opium

BRIDGE AT YUYIAO, NEAR SHANGHAI.

which found its way into Canton. A few days after the issuing of this notice, in January 1839, Commissioner Lin arrived at Canton, and hastened to make use of Captain Elliot's pronouncement in an edict denouncing the opium trade in terms both abusive and offensive, and finally demanded that all the opium stored in Canton should be surrendered within three days. By the advice of Captain Elliot, this request was complied with, and a large number of chests of opium were handed over, but Lin refused to be contented with these, and threatened to attack the foreign settlement forthwith. Thereupon, the British superintendent called upon the British merchants to surrender to himself all the opium in their possession. Over 20,000 chests of the drug, valued at more than £2,000,000 sterling, were thereupon delivered to Captain Elliot, who handed them over to Lin, by whom they were destroyed.

Elated at the success of his measures, Lin sought to discomfort the British further, and demanded that sixteen of the English merchants should be handed over to him, in order that they might be punished for having brought opium into the country. This last demand was too much, even for the vacillating British superintendent, and too weak to make a stand against the insolent mandarin, he advised the British Colony to leave Canton and retire to Macao. The merchants accordingly closed the factory and retired; while Captain Elliot despatched information of what had occurred to the British Government, with a request that protection should be accorded to the British traders,

whose interests were being endangered by the Chinese.

It is unnecessary to detail at length the events which transpired during the progress of the campaign, so absurdly termed the "opium" war. Its history has been ably told by more than one writer,* and its incidents form bright pages in the record of British prowess in the Far East. The result was a foregone conclusion from the outset. The fleet which was despatched from home to settle the Chinese question was sufficient to achieve its purpose. It consisted of fifteen battleships, four steamers, and twenty-five transports, carrying 4000 troops, and left England with instructions drawn up by Lord Palmerston. The policy of this country towards China was set out in the following statement made by Lord John Russell at the time :—

> The expedition was authorised for the purpose of obtaining reparation for the insults and injuries offered to Her Majesty's superintendent and Her Majesty's subjects by the Chinese Government; and, in the second place, they were to obtain for the merchants trading with China, an indemnification for the loss of their property incurred by threats of violence offered by persons under the direction of the Chinese Government; and, in the last place, they were to obtain a certain security that persons and property, in future trading with China, shall be protected from insult and injury, and that their trade and commerce be maintained upon a proper footing.

The fleet arrived at the mouth of the Canton River in June 1840. The British merchants, who had fled from Canton and been driven out of Macao, had taken refuge in the rocky island of Hong-kong, where they anxiously awaited the coming of the expedition which

* See Boulger's *History of China*.

was to re-establish them on the Mainland. An immediate blockade of the Canton River was declared, which was answered by Lin offering a reward for English heads. Sir Gordon Bremer next captured the island of Chusan, which was occupied during the continuance of the war, and, while this operation was in progress, the Bogue forts, commanding the entrance to Canton, were bombarded by two men-of-war.

The officer commanding the fleet had been charged with the delivery to the Chinese of a letter, containing a statement of the British claims, in order that it might be forwarded to the Emperor Taoukwang at Peking. The mandarin at Canton, Amoy, and Ningpo alike refused to accept the letter or to hold any intercourse with the British, whereupon the fleet sailed northwards to the Pei Ho, with the intention of penetrating to Tientsin, and, if need be, having the missive delivered inside the capital by an armed force. Captain Elliot accompanied this expedition as diplomatic agent, and, on arriving at the Pei Ho, was received by Keshen, the viceroy of Chili, who announced that he had been ordered by the Emperor to arrange matters. The viceroy accepted the letter, which he promised to deliver into the Emperor's hands, offered to supply the fleet with stores, and, finally, assured Captain Elliot that a satisfactory reply would be sent direct to Canton, and succeeded in persuading him to withdraw from the Pei Ho and return south. Accordingly, the British vessels left Taku and returned to Canton, while the astute viceroy communicated his triumphant disposal of the enemy to the Emperor, who promptly issued

orders for the struggle with the invaders to be resumed, and despatched troops to Kwangtung for the purpose of driving them into the sea. Lin was recalled and disgraced for not having succeeded in disposing of the barbarians, and Keshen was ordered to Canton to replace him.

But the patience of the British was by this time exhausted, and, as they realised that the only way of obtaining any concessions from the Chinese was by playing on their fears, an attack was ordered on the Bogue forts, and this was made on the 7th January 1841, with the result that they were taken and occupied by British troops under Captain Thomas Herbert. This success produced a great effect on the Chinese. Keshen sued for peace and offered to agree to all that had been asked. Hong-kong was ceded to the British, and the right to hold direct communication with the central Government promised. The prospect cleared, and it seemed as if all difficulties were about to be arranged. Hong-kong was formally occupied on the 29th January, the troops, necessary for the purpose, being drawn from Chusan, and the British merchants began to think of returning to Canton when the news arrived that Taoukwang refused to endorse the promises made by his commissioner, and that, wroth at the negotiations which Keshen had conducted with the barbarians, he had recalled him in disgrace. Another mandarin, one Eleang, succeeded Keshen, with instructions to drive the English out of the country.

A few days after this change of front on the part of the Chinese, Sir Hugh Gough arrived at the Bogue to

take supreme command of the British forces, and from this moment events moved quickly. Without wasting a day, Gough proceeded to reduce the various minor forts round Canton, and, the way having been cleared the city was attacked and its outer defences destroyed. The British merchants returned to the factories on the 18th March 1841. But it was only a lull before a fresh outbreak of hostilities. A few weeks later, Captain Elliot was insulted in the streets, and the British succeeded in getting away from Canton just in time to save themselves from a general attack by the mob. The factories were attacked and burned, and the Chinese were once more masters of the situation.

Sir Hugh Gough returned to Canton on the 24th May, and landed his 4000 men, with howitzers and mortars, which were speedily placed in position. Canton was doomed, and the Chinese recognised the fact. They accordingly once more resorted to diplomacy, and offered to pay a sum of 6,000,000 dollars as a ransom, on condition that the British would withdraw the troops. In face of the opposition of Sir Hugh Gough, Captain Elliot accepted this proposal, and the money had been partially paid when fresh disturbances broke out which prolonged the operations for another month. Eventually, however, the Canton Convention of 1841 was agreed to, and a truce declared, just as Sir Henry Pottinger, who had been appointed plenipotentiary, arrived from England. He speedily showed a marked contrast in his policy to that exhibited by Captain Elliot, who now retired. The Bogue forts, already in the hands of the British, were

destroyed. Amoy, Ningpo, and several other important towns were captured. By the end of 1841, every city on the central coast line was occupied, and attention was then turned to the districts inland. On the 13th June 1842, the British fleet entered the Yang-tse Kiang. On the 16th, Woosung was captured. Shanghai fell three days later. Chinkiang was reached on the 20th July, and Nanking on the 4th August. It was while our troops were disembarking off the southern capital that Keying arrived, as special commissioner from Peking, charged with coming to terms with these foreigners who had proved themselves too strong for the Chinese, and had at length, apparently, brought the Son of Heaven to his senses.

The negotiations which ensued lasted a fortnight, at the end of which, on the 29th August 1842, the first treaty between Great Britain and China was signed on board the *Cornwallis*, off Nanking, by Sir Henry Pottinger on behalf of the Queen, and Keying, High Commissioner, and three assistant commissioners on behalf of the Emperor of China.

The treaty of Nanking was of necessity drawn up somewhat hurriedly, and it contained several expressions which were not entirely unobjectionable, but it achieved much for the interests of this country, and, had the Chinese shown any desire to abide by its clauses, the history of the succeeding years might have been very different to what they were. The main enactments laid down in the treaty were:—The conclusion of a lasting peace between China and Great

Britain; the payment of an indemnity of 21,000,000 dollars by China to England; the opening of Amoy, Canton, Fuchow, Ningpo, and Shanghai to British trade, with permission for a British consul to reside at each; the cession of Hong-kong* to this country; and the occupation of the islands of Chusan and Kulangsu by British troops until the terms of the treaty should have been fulfilled.

The one great mistake made in the drawing up of the treaty of Nanking was the omission of a stipulation authorising the opening up of direct communications between this country and Peking. The omission was doubtless due to the fact that it was not yet perceived that the only way to successfully carry on negotiations with the Chinese was by working on them through their fears, and that this could only be achieved by a British resident at Peking. Notwithstanding this, however, the first treaty between the two empires was a step in the right direction, and should have served as a useful object lesson in methods of dealing with the mandarin, who then as now were easily handled, when satisfied that their opponent possessed sufficient force to compel them, and was prepared to use it.

The Emperor Taoukwang lost no time in ratifying the treaty. The British fleet was withdrawn, Sir Henry Pottinger returned to England, and Sir John Davis was appointed to look after British interests in

* Hong-kong had already been ceded to Great Britain by Keshin on 20th January 1841. The insertion of this clause in the treaty of Nanking was doubtless intended as formal recognition of the event.

China. The first consuls were duly chosen and proceeded to take up their posts, and the land required for the foreign settlements was obtained. Among the gentlemen who were appointed consuls were two whose names will always be remembered in connection with British expansion in China. They became afterwards Sir Thomas Wade and Sir Harry Parkes.

Soon after the treaty of Nanking had been signed, the French and American Governments decided to profit by the privileges which the British had obtained, and both countries sent out consuls to the various treaty ports. Nor were their offices sinecures. Trouble was constantly arising, and disputes, insults, and even attacks on the person were of daily occurrence. In 1846, a riot broke out in Canton, which was with difficulty quelled, and an attempt was made to keep the foreigners within the limits of their settlements, and to restrict them from entering the native city. In March 1847, a party of Englishmen were attacked at Fatshan, a town near Canton, and only just escaped with their lives. Recognising the insecurity of the position, Sir John Davies determined to teach the Chinese a lesson, in the hope that he might be able to obtain greater liberty and security for the merchants under his charge. Accordingly, on the 3rd April, he started with two regiments from Hong-kong, and, having landed at the entrance to the Canton River, seized the batteries which had been constructed on the site of the Bogue forts, and, proceeding up river, took, without encountering resistance, the forts opposite the city. He thereupon

demanded that Canton should be opened to foreigners, and that the British should be permitted to go about the country, provided they returned to the city at night. Keying agreed to these demands, and quiet was restored, though a good many of the natives assumed a threatening attitude. While these measures were being taken at Canton, similar disputes were in progress at the other treaty ports, and several encounters took place between the foreigners and the natives.

The opening of Canton to foreigners had been fixed for the 6th April 1849. But, as that date came near, no preparations were made by the officials, and it has been suggested that even had they desired to keep the pledge they had made, they would have been prevented from doing so by the attitude of the Cantonese. The Chinese, in short, would not have the foreigners in their midst. The position thus became acute and the question arose, What could the British authorities do to improve the state of things which existed?

In 1852, British interests in China were entrusted to Dr John Bowring, who entered on his duties with instructions "to avoid all irritating discussions with the authorities of China." He had some experience of the Chinese character, having officiated previously as consul at Canton, and he sent home a report on the position, in which he wrote: "The Pottinger Treaties inflicted a deep wound in the pride, but, by no means, altered the policy of the Chinese Government. . . . Their purpose is now, as it ever was, not to invite, not

to facilitate, but to impede and resist the access of foreigners."

In 1854, Dr Bowring received a knighthood, and the viceroy of Kwangtung had been succeeded by the subsequently notorious commissioner, Yeh. And, in the same year, Sir John Bowring receiving the notification of a change in his instructions, was ordered by Lord Clarendon to obtain free and unrestricted intercourse with the Chinese officials, and admission into the cities of China, Canton especially.

Sir John Bowring accordingly forwarded to the commissioner an official request for an interview, adding that it should take place in Canton. To this Yeh sent an ambiguous reply, nor, during the two years spent by the governor of Hong-kong in endeavouring to come to an understanding with the representative of the Emperor, did he fare any better. An appeal to the viceroy was fruitless. Yeh would have nothing to do with the foreigners, and his face was never seen by an Englishman until after the fall of Canton he was run to earth and taken prisoner by Harry Parkes.

With relations thus strained between the natives and their visitors, it only required a spark to cause the smouldering mischief to burst into flame. This was supplied in October 1856 by the seizure of the lorcha *Arrow*, a vessel engaged in the hardware trade between Canton and Hong-kong, sailing under the British flag, and owned by a British subject. The lorcha was seized by a party of mandarin, who boarded her while at anchor off Canton. The crew were marched ashore and put in prison, and the vessel

impounded. Remonstrance was useless. Mr Parkes sent a strong letter to Yeh, demanding the release of the prisoners, and insisting that the whole matter should be sifted at the British consulate. Yeh declined to negotiate. He did not even attempt to justify himself. He made certain statements, and refused to discuss the question. The matter was a serious one, and immediate reprisals were necessary. Sir Michael Seymour, the admiral on the station, was communicated with, and promptly entered the river and captured the forts without loss. The commissioner made no sign. He reasoned that the English only sought to intimidate him, and refused to be intimidated.

The second Chinese war arose from entirely different circumstances to those which gave rise to the first. In 1839 the Chinese, anxious to rid themselves of the despised foreigner, had seized on the importation of opium as a nominal *casus belli*. The question at issue was whether the British were to be permitted to sell the Indian drug within the Empire. In 1856 the foreigner's presence had been condoned, and the trouble arose from the refusal of the officials to enter into personal relations with him. There was nothing in the treaty of Nanking requiring the mandarin to have dealings with the British, and Yeh insisted that he was strictly within his rights in abstaining from all intercourse with either the governor of Hong-kong or the consul at Canton.

The Canton forts were taken on the 28th October 1856. The Chinese fleet was destroyed the following

month, and the bombardment of the city commenced immediately after. Early in December the European factories were burned by the Chinese; and then ensued a pause, while the arrival of troops from England was eagerly awaited. Sir Michael Seymour had asked for 5000 men. His request was at once granted, and it was decided to despatch an ambassador to China to take charge of the negotiations which would be necessary, and to inform the Peking Government that this country would not permit the continuation of such conduct as that of which Yeh had been guilty. The envoy chosen was Lord Elgin, and he was instructed to demand reparation for injuries inflicted; the complete fulfilment of the treaty of Nanking and of the convention agreed on between Keying and Sir John Davis in 1847; compensation to British subjects for losses suffered, and, most important of all, the assent of the Chinese Government to the residence at Peking of a minister duly accredited by the Queen of England.

Unfortunately, the outbreak of the Indian Mutiny rendered it necessary for Lord Elgin to delay his operations in China, and it was not until the middle of September 1857 that troops were available for this purpose. Canton was then invested. A last attempt was made to bring Yeh to reason, but without result. The city was bombarded once more and taken. Yeh was captured and sent to Calcutta a prisoner on board a man-of-war, and Canton was effectually occupied by the French and English troops.

And then Lord Elgin turned his attention to the

carrying out of the instructions he had received, and, after attempting, without success, to open negotiations with a first-class mandarin at Shanghai, he announced his intention of going north to interview the authorities at Peking. In this programme Lord Elgin was supported by Baron Gros, the French admiral, who decided to join forces with him, and the united fleets made sail for the Pei Ho, where they arrived on the 20th May 1858, to find the river closed against them.

The Taku forts fell an easy prey to the foreign guns, and the fleet continued its way to Tientsin without hindrance. Lord Elgin took up his residence ashore, and the Chinese, greatly impressed by the intrepidity of the invaders, told the news with bated breath in Peking. The Emperor Hienfung thereupon named two high commissioners of rank to go and conduct negotiations with the "barbarians," and instructed his envoys to meet the wishes of the said barbarians, provided nothing likely to injure China was required.

Accordingly, the commissioners went to Tientsin and had an interview with Lord Elgin, who placed his demands before them, and they at once agreed to all that was asked, except the right of sending an ambassador to reside at Peking. Every possible excuse was made to avoid this concession, and, seeing that Lord Elgin refused to withdraw the request, they attempted to argue the point, explained that the presence of an envoy at the capital would be likely to place him in danger, and laid special stress on the fact that he would be required to perform the Kowtow, in the event of his being accorded an audience by the

Emperor. Eventually, the point was conceded by the mandarin, and the treaty of Tientsin was drawn up and duly signed by Lord Elgin and the Chinese plenipotentiaries on the 26th June 1858.

The treaty provides for the sending of ambassadors, ministers, or other diplomatic agents by the Queen, to the Court of Peking, and of similar representatives by the Emperor of China to the Court of St James's; the freedom of trade with China; the toleration of Christianity; the right of British subjects to travel in all parts of China; the payment by China of the cost of the war; the revision of the tariff; and the disuse of the word "barbarian," as applied to foreigners in China. By the XI article of this treaty five more ports were opened to foreign trade: Chauchow, Kiungchow, Newchang, Taiwan, and Tangchow; and the opening of Chinkiang and Hankow, with not more than three other ports on the Yang-tse River, was fixed to take place at as early a date as possible.

Having thus achieved the object of his mission, Lord Elgin left Tientsin. He did not make any attempt to obtain an audience of the Emperor, nor did he take any steps to place a resident minister in Peking. Entirely ignorant of the workings of the Chinese mind, he failed to recognise that a treaty is worthless unless immediately enforced, and, without even attempting to visit the capital, he sailed down river on a visit to Japan.

As soon as the British fleet had left the Pei Ho, the Chinese proceeded to restore the forts at its mouth, and, immediately the news of its departure had pene-

trated south, the Cantonese returned to their old tactics of causing the English as much annoyance and inflicting as great indignities on them as possible.

Early in March 1859, Mr Frederick Bruce, who had been appointed Her Majesty's representative for the purpose of exchanging ratifications of the treaty of Tientsin, sailed for the Pei Ho. He was specially warned by Lord Malmesbury that the Chinese would probably use every means to prevent his entering Peking, and instructed to remain firm and insist on the ratifications being exchanged in the capital, as stipulated in the original treaty. It was imperative that the treaty should be ratified before the 26th June, and Mr Bruce, after evading the attempts to detain him made by the mandarin both at Hong-kong and Shanghai, anchored off the mouth of the Pei Ho on 20th June. He found the entrance to the river closed by a row of iron stakes, as well as by a boom. The forts at Taku were manned, and a huge crowd of natives stood gathered on the shore daring the "barbarians" to land. Denied admission to the country, nothing remained for the envoy but to instruct the ships to force an entrance. Accordingly, Admiral Hope ordered the removal of the iron stakes, and, this having been done without resistance, the fleet moved up to the boom off the forts, which immediately began firing, and considerably damaged several of the ships, and sank two gunboats. An assault was then made on the forts, but the attack failed, and nearly 300 men were killed. The fleet thereupon withdrew, leaving the Chinese masters of the situation, and strengthened

in their determination to resist the "barbarians" to the last.

In November a fresh expedition sailed from Hongkong under the command of Sir Hope Grant, who had with him altogether 13,000 men, and these were reinforced by an army of 6000 French under Baron Gros, who decided to co-operate with the British. Kauloon, which had early in the year been leased on behalf of this country by Mr Parkes, was the place of mobilisation, and hence the united fleets sailed early in June 1860. Chusan was again occupied without opposition. The Pei Ho was reached early in August, and a landing was effected at Pehtang, in the rear of Taku, on the 12th. The forts were taken without much difficulty. The fleet removed the obstacles at the entrance to the river, and the whole expedition duly arrived at Tientsin on the 26th August, when the attitude of the people was unexpectedly friendly. At this juncture, Kweilyang, a mandarin who had been one of the negotiators of the Tientsin treaty, appeared upon the scene as high commissioner, charged with carrying out its ratification. His proposal was met with the formulation of three conditions, under which alone would hostilities be terminated. Lord Elgin demanded an apology for the attack on the British envoy at Pei Ho, the payment of an indemnity to cover the costs of the war, and the exchange of the ratifications of the treaty inside Peking with the accredited representative of the Queen of Great Britain. It soon became evident to Lord Elgin that the apparent desire of the mandarin to arrive at a friendly termination of

all disputes, was in reality only an attempt to gain time in which reinforcements might arrive. Accordingly, satisfied that nothing short of a severe lesson would bring the Chinese to their senses, the allied forces left Tientsin and marched towards Tungchow. It was while they were midway between these places that Mr Parkes had gone ahead to obtain an interview with the mandarin at Tungchow, in the hope of arranging an interview between the Chinese officials and the French and English commanders. Mr Parkes succeeded in meeting the mandarin, with whom he had a long and stormy interview, which led to no useful result. He thereupon returned to Sir Hope Grant's camp to announce the failure of his errand. On the 17th September, he again returned to Tungchow, accompanied by Mr Loch, Mr de Norman, Colonel Beauchamp Walker, Mr Thomson, and Mr Bowlby, special correspondent of *The Times*, to make another attempt at arranging a meeting between the mandarin and the allied ambassadors. The party was detained under various pretexts, and Mr Parkes, Mr Loch, Mr de Norman, and Mr Bowlby were taken prisoners, and, bound hand and foot, despatched to Peking, where they were imprisoned on the 21st September. On the same day, a pitched battle was fought, the Chinese were routed, and the allies marched without further hindrance to Peking, which was reached on 8th October. Mr Parkes and Mr Loch were thereupon liberated, and rejoined the British force, but Mr de Norman and Mr Bowlby were found dead from ill-usage, while the others were never seen again, and are

supposed to have died from the effects of the treatment accorded them.*

Peking was finally invested on the 12th October. Hienfung fled to his hunting-seat at Jehol, outside the Great Wall, but the Empress refused to leave the capital. Sir Hope Grant, finding it impossible to pursue the fugitive, determined on giving the Chinese an object lesson, which they would not be likely to forget. On the 18th October, the order was given for the destruction of the Summer Palace, so recently vacated by the Emperor. It was accordingly seized and destroyed by fire,† and a proclamation was issued, demanding the payment of £100,000 in compensation for the murder of the prisoners. The palace of Prince Tsai was appropriated for the accommodation of Lord Elgin and Baron Gros, and the "Hall of Ceremonies" was chosen as an appropriate place in which to exchange formally the ratification of the treaty of 1858. The ceremony was duly performed with every display of pomp on the 24th October. Lord Elgin and Sir Hope Grant in chairs of state, escorted by a large number of officers and 500 troops, proceeded to the hall through the streets of Peking. The Imperial Seal was affixed to the treaty by Prince Kung, acting under an imperial edict issued for that purpose. The object of the expedition had been attained.‡ The right of residence was finally accorded

* Refer Lane-Poole's *Life of Sir Harry Parkes*, vol. i., for full particulars of these outrages.

† Refer Lord Wolseley's *Narrative of the War with China*.

‡ Refer Loch's *Narrative of Events in China*, for a picturesque description of the scene at the signing of the treaty.

to the representatives of Foreign Powers, and Mr Frederick Bruce, having been provided with an official residence, was inducted into the post of first British minister at Peking. The allied forces thereupon withdrew, and reached the mouth of the Pei Ho just before the river was closed by the ice.

Thus ended a struggle which had begun twenty years before. During the whole of the interval the Chinese had steadfastly endeavoured to rid themselves of the foreigners, who insisted on the holding of intercourse with the Celestials, and now, finally defeated in all their attempts, the mandarin were at last brought to realise that it was useless to protest, and that the only course open to them was to accept the inevitable and treat the despised "barbarians" with at least a simulated courtesy. Satisfactory as the results of the operations of 1859-60 were, one cannot but be struck by the fact that Lord Elgin neglected a most necessary duty, in leaving Peking without insisting on his right to receive an audience of the Emperor. Had he done this, he would once and for all have disposed of the great audience question which was destined to drag on for another score of years; and there is no question but that the omission to take this very obvious course, was responsible for many of the slights which were subsequently put upon the British residents in Peking.

WEI HAI WEI FROM THE ANCHORAGE.

CHAPTER VI.

THE BRITISH RECORD.

From the Signing of the Treaty of Tientsin.

While the British and French forces were engaged in bringing the Chinese to their senses in the provinces of Kwangtung and Chili, the foreign merchants in other parts of China were gradually coming to a better understanding with the natives, and the commercial intercourse, which had with such great difficulty been established, was extending, with satisfactory results to both nations. Amoy, Fuchow, and Ningpo had developed early in the history of their internal relations into centres of a considerable foreign trade, while Shanghai had outstripped them all and, within five years of the signing of the treaty of Nanking, had become the most important market in China. The following extract from the report of Mr Alcock, the consul at Shanghai, to Sir John Davis, in 1848, shows the condition of affairs at this period on the Woosung River :—

The position of foreign residents and the local conditions under which trade is carried on are highly satisfactory. Many facilities and advantages have been gained during the past year. The town,

on the banks of the river within the British limits, is rapidly increasing. There are now located in it twenty-four mercantile firms (three American), with their houses of business and extensive godowns. There are, in addition, five shopkeepers' stores, twenty-five private residences, a church, an hotel, a club-house, etc., extending along the river front more than a quarter of a mile, and stretching backwards double this distance, with intervening gardens, racing ground, cemetery, etc.; 632,820 dollars are estimated to have been expended already in land and buildings within our boundaries. The climate has proved healthy, only three deaths, in four years, having occurred among the residents, and these are not fairly to be attributed to Shanghai, but to causes which would have produced death elsewhere.*

The progress recorded in the above report was due in great measure to the more peaceable character of the natives of Chekiang, as compared with those of Kwangtung. But it was without doubt largely helped by lack of communication existing between the Woosung River and Peking. When the court officials were kept informed of the relations existing between the natives and the foreign residents, as was always the case at Canton, trouble was certain to ensue, and, notwithstanding the according of the Imperial Seal to the treaties between Great Britain and China, every mandarin who had been instrumental in bringing about the concessions obtained was either degraded or dismissed. The charge of being favourably disposed towards foreigners had always been the most serious which could be urged against a Chinese official, and at least a score of first-class mandarins were severely punished for their toleration, while many more were

* Returns of the Trade of the Various Ports in China, for the years 1847–48. Parliamentary Paper, No. 188, 1848.

promoted to the highest posts, as a reward for the anti-barbarian activity they had displayed.

Notwithstanding the satisfactory state of the foreign settlements in 1848, the life of the foreigner in China was, at this period, not an enviable one.

> The foreign community lived in dread of an outbreak of fanaticism, and the merchants kept their books and papers packed, in preparation for instant flight. It was unsafe to enter a Chinese boat on the river. . . . One could not walk through the suburbs, without having foul words, and, very probably, stones cast at one. A long series of unprovoked outrages, rising now and then to brutal murder, had taught Europeans at the factories to be careful how they ventured outside, and he was accounted a daring man who risked a five-mile walk from the consulate.*

A feature of the British record which was largely responsible for the difficulties experienced was the want of continuity in the policy pursued by the various officials who were charged with the guarding of our interests in the Far East. In many cases the vacillation of the Home Government, whatever its cause may have been, resulted in the exhibition of an apparent weakness, which the Celestials were not slow to perceive. From the withdrawal of the monopoly enjoyed by the East India Company to the present day, British policy in China has been constantly changing, according to the particular views of the Government which has happened to be in power. The exhibition of a definite policy has been the rarest occurrence, and, while our interests have been the care of many good men at the front, their action has been cramped and

* Report of Select Committee on Commercial Relations with China, 1847.

their efforts counteracted by the eccentricities of the Government at home.

One of the ablest declarations of policy ever made with reference to our dealings with the Chinese, is that written by Lord Palmerston in 1847, in the form of a despatch to Sir John Davis :—

> We shall lose all the vantage ground we have gained by our victories in China if we take a low tone. We must take especial care not to descend from the relative position which we have acquired. If we maintain that position morally by the tone of our intercourse, we shall not be obliged to recover it by forcible acts; but if we permit the Chinese, either at Canton or elsewhere, to resume, as they will no doubt be always endeavouring to do, their former tone of superiority, we shall very soon be compelled to come to blows with them again. . . . . We must stop on the very threshold any attempt on their part to treat us otherwise than as their equals, and we must make them all clearly understand, though in the civilest terms, that our treaty rights must be respected.*

The reader will be able to judge for himself how far this eminently sound advice has been followed in the relations which have since existed between Great Britain and China.

Shortly after the Tientsin Treaty, Lord Elgin returned to Shanghai and decided on sending an expedition up the Yang-tse Kiang, with the object of exploring the river and opening it up to British trade, as provided for in the tenth article of the treaty. The expedition was entrusted to Sir James Hope, and its object became a matter of great interest, owing to the success which had attended the continued rising of the Taeping

* Parliamentary Papers, 1847. Correspondence relative to the operations in the Canton River.

rebels, who had for nearly ten years overrun the country. At the time of the start of the expedition, Nanking was held by the insurgents, who, with an army of 80,000 men, carried everything before them. The rebellion had grown from small beginnings, until it had assumed such proportions as to dominate the whole of Southern China, and to threaten, for a time at least, the capital.

The originator of the Taeping rebellion was one Hung Swei-tseuen, a Christian convert, who, posing as a mystic, attracted a small band of followers in the province of Kwangsi, whither he had emigrated from his native district of Canton. Finding that the principles he enunciated found a ready acceptance, he, about 1840, decided to devote himself exclusively to the introduction of a new régime in human affairs. He preached Christianity in a more or less subverted form and enjoined a strictly moral life. His doctrines attracted much attention, and in 1845 he received the adhesion of the great Triad Society—the most powerful of the secret organisations in Southern China—which stands pledged to the expulsion of the Manchus and the restoration of a native Chinese dynasty.

Strengthened by union with this society, the Taepings became a power in the land, and fascinated by the visions of the new demagogue, the conspirators seized the city of Yungan, in which they hailed their leader as the first Emperor of the new dynasty of Taeping, which signifies Grand Peace. The city was occupied and held, despite all attempts made by the Imperial soldiers to drive the rebels out, and in

April 1852 the insurgents sallied forth on their mission —the regeneration of China. Wherever they went they conquered. They fought their way through the provinces of Kwangsi and Hunan, growing in numbers on the way, until they entered the valley of the Yang-tse, and captured the capitals of Hupeh and Anwei. In 1853, they laid siege to Nanking, which they occupied after massacring the garrison, and in the following year they despatched a large force across the river, with the object of effecting the capture of Peking. In this attempt, the rebels were, however, defeated, and had to return to Nanking, which remained their stronghold. Despite the collapse of the movement in the Northern provinces, the power of the Taepings continued in the south until 1864, when the Imperial forces—nicknamed the "ever-victorious army," and led by General Gordon, who had been lent to the Government by the British—beat the insurgents everywhere, and finally recaptured Nanking, and dispersed the rebels in July of that year.*

British interests had been materially affected by the rebellion. Amoy had been the scene of much fighting, Shanghai had been besieged, and the approaches to Canton occupied. In the Southern provinces, however, the success of the rebels had not been lasting. Their strength lay on the great river, which they practically controlled as far as Ichang. During the progress of the rebellion, the British observed a policy of strict neutrality, and, beyond taking measures for the protection of their settlements, took no part in the

* Refer Egmont Hakes' *Events of the Taeping Rebellion.*

events which stirred the Empire. It was while the Taepings were in possession of Nanking, Kiukiang, Wuchang, and other cities on the banks of the Yang-tse, that on the 21st February 1861 Admiral Hope left Shanghai, on his progress up the river.

The first errand completed was the establishing of a consulate at Chinkiang, at one time an extensive city, but practically destroyed by the rebels, who held the place for four years and only left it when there was nothing to hold, and because it had ceased to be of use to them.* It was with great difficulty that a building was found to serve as a consulate; the place eventually chosen being a disused temple, "only fit for use as a cowhouse," in charge of which after it had been cleaned, Mr Phillips, the newly appointed consul, was placed and the union jack hoisted on an improvised flagstaff. At Nanking the expedition was accorded a friendly reception by the rebel leaders. The city, which was surrounded by walls no less than eighteen miles in circumference, was found to be practically deserted, the inhabitants who remained being mostly women. The Taepings were described in the official report as "looking like a pack of robbers who had just looted a city."† These gentry were duly cautioned as to their conduct, and their leaders were served with a proclamation drawn up by the admiral, informing them that the British had acquired the right of navigating the Yang-tse, that they must not interfere with the merchant vessels in the river, and that a man-of-war would be

* Journal of Sir Harry Parkes.

† Blue Book on the Rebellion of 1862.

stationed off Nanking to preserve order and protect British interests.

There has been told by a gentleman who accompanied the expedition,* an amusing story, which serves to illustrate Parkes' inimitable method of dealing with the Celestial intelligence. Harry Parkes, who, during a long life spent in China, rose from the position of student interpreter to be minister at Peking, probably knew the Chinese better than any Englishman before or since his time. He was the first to appreciate the necessity of firmness in dealing with the Celestial, and he was invariably successful in the methods he adopted. When Parkes, acting as interpreter at the interview between the admiral and the rebel chiefs, informed the Taepings that a man-of-war would be stationed off Nanking, the self-styled "native prince" replied that this could not be, as he had had a vision which forbade his sanctioning such an arrangement. Parkes immediately retorted: "Nonsense—won't do at all—you must have another vision." The leader having gauged his man, promptly obeyed his instructions and agreed to the desired arrangement.

After leaving Nanking; Wuhu, Kiukiang, and Hankow were visited, and the two last provided with consuls to superintend the development of British trade. During the delay necessitated by the making of the requisite arrangements at Hankow, there arose an alarm that the rebels were approaching, with the intention of attacking the city. The inhabitants immediately became panic-stricken, and, in response

* Mr Alexander Michie.

to the suggestion that there was no need for flight, as the mandarin would surely protect the people, the natives replied that the officials were not to be relied upon, and that their lives were at the mercy of the rebels if they chose to take them. The scenes witnessed on this occasion, despite the fact that the rumour proved to be false, served as a useful example of the utter inefficiency of the mandarin, and the dread in which the rebels were held by the people, many of whom in their mad panic threw themselves into the river and were drowned.

The opening of the Yang-tse to British trade was, undoubtedly, next to the establishment of an embassy at Peking, the most important step hitherto gained in China. The results, commercial and political, which have grown from the expedition of Admiral Hope in 1861, are immense, and the value of the waterway as a trade highway, great though it has already proved to be, remains yet only partially developed—a rich inheritance for generations of British merchants yet unborn.

The autumn of 1861 witnessed an interesting ceremony at Canton, where a tract of land lying along the river bank had been reclaimed and added to the foreign concession. This land was sold by auction, and fetched phenomenal prices, thus proving the estimate of British rule which was held in China. In October of the same year the allied troops, which had invested Canton for so long, were withdrawn, and the city was handed back to the custody of the Chinese. The evacuation was completed on the 21st, three years and ten days after the occupation.

The case with which the British had invariably beaten the Chinese in the field, coupled with the better understanding which had been brought about by the signing of the treaty of Tientsin, served to teach the Chinese that their methods of defence were unfitted to cope with the forces of Western nations, and the offer made in 1862 of the loan of a British officer to command the Imperial troops and lead them against the Taepings, was at once accepted. Shortly after this, the Chinese availed themselves of the services of Mr H. N. Lay, who had been appointed, under the tenth article of the treaty of Tientsin, to arrange with the Chinese a tariff of custom dues on goods imported into China, and this gentleman was intrusted with the purchase of a fleet of gunboats which was to serve as the nucleus of a Chinese navy. In response to the application of the Central Government, Captain Sherard Osborn was placed at the disposal of the Chinese, by whom he was appointed commodore of the fleet. The vessels were duly purchased by Mr Lay in England, and arrived at Tientsin, in charge of Captain Osborn, in May 1863. But difficulties at once arose between the Chinese and their naval chief. Captain Osborn, supported by Mr Lay, announced his readiness to obey implicitly the instructions of the Central Government, but refused either to place himself at the orders of the provincial mandarin or to consent to the sharing of his authority with a Chinese official. The Chinese objected to permit Captain Osborn to act single-handed on behalf of the authorities, and insisted on his being associated with a mandarin who had never seen

a gunboat ; and, in default of an arrangement being arrived at, the fleet remained in the Pei Ho inactive, while Gordon took command of the "ever-victorious army," and showed the Chinese that he was capable of suppressing the rebellion. Satisfied that the army would succeed in doing the work to effect which the gunboats had been purchased, the Chinese decided that the vessels would not be needed. Captain Osborn resigned his command, and the ships were sent back to England and sold.

The prominence accorded foreigners in China about this time gave great offence to certain classes of the people and their anger found vent in the rising of the literati at Yangchow on the 22nd August 1868, when the Protestant mission-houses were destroyed, and the missionaries only saved their lives by flight. This outrage, for which compensation was obtained only after considerable trouble, was the first of a series of attacks on foreigners which culminated in the riots and massacres of 1895. In every instance it was clearly shown that the mischief arose not with the people but with the mandarin or literati class, who, while not as a rule taking an active part in the outrages, suggested insults, and even incited the mob to harry the Christian "barbarians" in their midst. In June 1870 a series of the most cold-blooded murders occurred at Tientsin, where the Roman Catholic missions were attacked, and twenty-two persons, the greater part of them ladies, together with the French Consul, were brutally massacred. Among the numerous anti-foreign manifestations have been the destruction of the chapels at Fatshan in 1870,

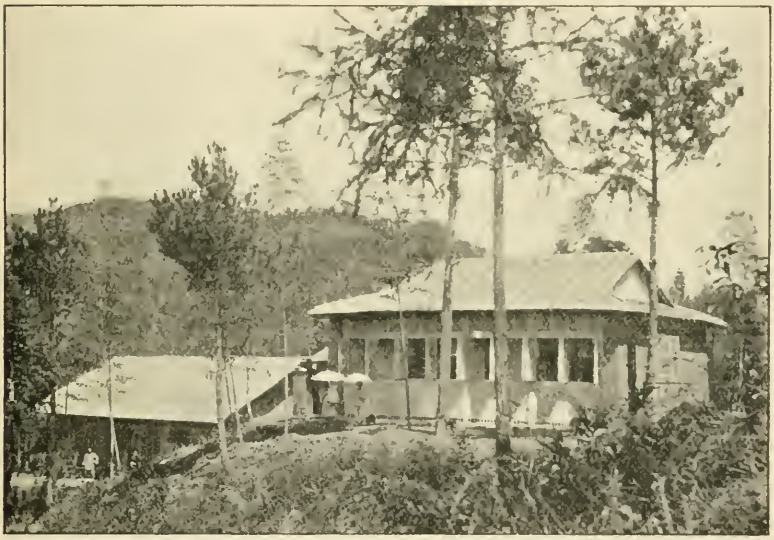
the attack on the Wushihshan mission in 1878, the Chinkiang riots in 1889, and the massacre of native Christians at Jongtuytsin in 1890. In 1891 extensive rioting occurred in the foreign settlement at Wuhu; in the same year the Ichang mission was destroyed. The outbreak of the war between Japan and China inflamed the anti-foreign feeling throughout the Empire, and the years '94 and '95 were marked by quite a number of outrages, accompanied in several instances by murder. The more notable of these manifestations occurred at Chengtu, Whasang, and Fatshan. The massacre at Whasang was one of the most brutal which has taken place in China. There were a considerable number of missionaries stationed there, and it was known that the sect or secret society, known as "vegetarians," were very anti-foreign in their views, but it was not suspected that they would go the length of openly attacking the settlement.

The party consisted of Mr and Mrs Stewart with their five children and a young nurse named Helena Yellop, the Misses H. E. and E. M. Saunders, and the Misses Codrington, Annie Gordon, Elsie Marshall, Hessie Newcombe, and Flora Stewart. A narrative of the scene given by an eye-witness, Miss M. C. Hartford, of the American Mission, will speak for itself :—

On 1st August, at half-past seven o'clock in the morning, I heard shouts and screams for the servants to get up, as the Vegetarians were coming, and were tearing down the houses on the hill belonging to the English Mission. Soon afterwards I met a man with a trident spear. He yelled out, "Here is a foreign woman," and pointed his spear at my chest. I twisted it to one side. It just grazed my head and ear. He then threw me on the ground and

beat me with the wooden end of the spear. I afterwards jumped down an embankment, and ran till I reached the hill, when I stopped to recover my breath. The yells continued, and I saw two houses being burned to the ground.

Subsequently all was quiet, and, supposing that the Vegetarians had gone, I sent a servant to inquire what had happened. He returned and told me to come home, stating that five ladies be-



SCENE OF THE MASSACRE AT WHASANG, 1895.

longing to the English Mission had been killed and others wounded, but that my house had not been troubled. I went home, and there found Miss Codrington, much cut about the head, and beaten all over; Mildred Stewart, twelve years of age, with her knee cut, and bleeding very much; Herbert Stewart, six years of age, with his head cut, and almost dead; while the baby of the Stewart family had one eye black and swollen, and the second Stewart girl, Kathleen, eleven years of age, together with the second boy, Evan, three years of age, had been beaten and stabbed with a spear, but not seriously injured.

The Rev. H. S. Phillips, of the English Mission, who lived in a native house, some distance away, escaped injury, only arriving in time to see the bodies of the dead, and hear the Vegetarians say, "We have killed all the foreigners." At first we heard that some of the foreigners had escaped and were in hiding, but Mr Stewart did not come, and we began to fear the worst. Mr Phillips went to the ruins of the burned houses, and there found eight bodies, five of them unburned, and three so terribly scorched as to be unrecognisable.

Dr Gregory arrived after darkness had set in, and dressed the wounds of the surviving patients. Coffins were made, and in these the bodies of the dead were placed, while the bones of those who had been burned were put into boxes. Subsequently, another burned body was found, making nine in all. Topsy Saunders ran out of the house, and was killed outside. Hessie Newcombe was thrown down an embankment, her head having been almost severed from her body, while Annie Gordon's head was also almost severed. When the bodies had been coffined we left Whasang for Chiukow at four o'clock in the afternoon on 2nd August. Herbert Stewart died three hours later, just below Coiong. We carried the body in a chair, and had a coffin made for it at Chiukow, which we reached at eight o'clock on the following morning.

The party of survivors arrived at Fuhchow on Monday, 5th August, and the burial of the murdered missionaries took place at midnight.

The intense anti-foreign prejudice which found expression in these outrages was largely due to the attitude assumed by the mandarin, who did not scruple to advertise their dislike of the Christian barbarians. More than one official of the first-class strove to curry favour with the Tsungli Yamen by encouraging attacks on the missionaries, and it was established beyond question that the Tientsin massacre was suggested, if not ordered, by Chung How, at that time superintendent of trade at the Northern ports. The feel-

ing thus aroused among the people found expression not only in attacks on foreigners but in slights passed upon mandarin who were suspected of sympathising with them. Ma, the viceroy of Kiangsu, who had exhibited a tendency towards tolerance of the Christians with whom he came into contact, was on that account barbarously murdered by the populace of Nanking in August 1870.

The stimulus given to foreign intercourse by the treaty of Tientsin had led to a very considerable increase both in the number of British merchants and in the extent of British trade in China. The gradual opening up of the coast provinces and the exploitation of the cities on the Yang-tse Kiang, caused the traders to turn their eyes inland and seek for a means of opening up commercial relations with the unexplored and reputedly rich country far away from the recognised trade routes; and among the numerous suggestions made was the opening up of over-land communication between India and the Celestial Empire. The question of creating such a trade route was mooted in the early sixties, and the proposal of the Indian authorities had received cordial support from the commercial community of Rangoon. It was known that such a route had existed for centuries, and, in the treaty of peace signed at Bhamo in 1769, there was a stipulation that the "gold and silver road" between China and Burma should be re-opened. The possibility of using this "road" for purposes of trade had been reported on by Colonel Burney, the resident in Ava, as far back as 1830. In 1848, Baron des Granges

drew attention to the great commercial possibilities of Bhamo, and, in 1862, General Fytche again dwelt enthusiastically on the great importance of examining the possible and probable results of re-opening the Bhamo route. An attempt has been made by Colonel Sladen to explore the back door into Yunnan in 1868, without, however, leading to anything definite; and, in 1873, the Indian Government determined to despatch another exploring party to make surveys and report on the prospects of opening up the desired highway. Instructions were sent to the British representatives at Mandalay and at Peking in accordance with the opinion expressed by Lord Northbrook, who telegraphed to the India Office: "Agreement of Chinese Government an essential preliminary."

After considerable delay the necessary authority was obtained. The King of Burma agreed to the expedition meeting at Bhamo, and the Tsungli Yamen consented to grant permission in accordance with the right of travel conferred by the ninth article of the treaty of Tientsin. These preliminaries being arranged, it was decided that, in order to assure the success of the expedition, it would be well for some person acquainted with the country to be traversed, as well as with the people and the language, to accompany the expedition. A communication to this effect was sent to Mr, afterwards Sir Thomas, Wade, at that time British minister at Peking, and his choice fell on Mr Augustus Raymond Margary, an attaché at the embassy, who had made himself master of the Chinese language and who was greatly esteemed by

the minister. Mr Margary was accordingly instructed to proceed to Shanghai, and thence, after ascending the Yang-tse as far as Yochau, to take a route through Hunan, Kweichau, and Yunnan to Bhamo, where he would find awaiting his arrival the expedition under the command of Colonel Horace Brown, whom he would conduct into China by the same route he had traversed on the outward journey.

Margary left Shanghai on the 23rd August 1874. He reached Hankow five days later, and set out thence, on the 4th September, on what he himself describes as his "six months' plunge into darkness."* Passing unarmed and almost unattended through a country never before explored by a European, Margary visited a number of cities in which the population had never even heard of the British nation. Provided with passports from the Tsungli Yamen, he was well received by the officials, and journeyed without interference. He reached the city of Yunnan on the 29th November and Talifu a fortnight later, and entered Bhamo on the 17th January 1875, to find Colonel Brown and his expedition awaiting him.

After a rest of three weeks, the expedition started on its long journey. The route chosen was that which leads to Manwyne in Yunnan. Arrived at the Nampoung guardhouse, the last on the Burmese side of the frontier, rumours of impending trouble were heard, and it was deemed wise to delay further advance until information of a reassuring character was received. It was stated that the Kakyen tribe,

* Journal of A. R. Margary from Shanghai to Bhamo and back to Manwyne.

which inhabits the hills on the border-land, were mustering in force, with the object of preventing the passage of the expedition through their country, and Colonel Brown decided to await developments. Margary made light of the rumours, and maintained that there was not the slightest danger. He reminded Colonel Brown and Dr Anderson, who accompanied the expedition as official naturalist, that he had come safely through the Kakyen Hills alone, and that he was known to all the officials at the towns through which their route lay. Finding that the officer in charge of the expedition remained unconvinced, he volunteered to go on ahead, ascertain the position of affairs, and send back his report as soon as possible. He accordingly started on his errand on the 19th February, with a Chinese secretary and a few servants.

On the 20th, a letter was received from Margary, dated from Seray, where he had been well received, and whence he was about to start for Manwyne. Encouraged by this report, the expedition started, and arrived at Seray on the 21st, but, contrary to expectation, no further communication awaited them, and on the following morning the camp was attacked by armed natives, while news came in from the Burmese agents at Manwyne that Margary had been brutally murdered there on the previous day. The expedition had to fight its way back to the frontier through large numbers of hillmen, who attempted to persuade the Burmese guard to desert their charge, in order that the "foreign devils" might be slain. Fortunately, the

escort proved loyal, and Colonel Brown and his companions reached Bhamo in safety.

Such is the story of the murder of Augustus Margary,—a story which reflects the more discredit on the Chinese from the fact that the victim was travelling under special permit from Peking, and that the various officials along the route he travelled were well acquainted both with his credentials and with the object of his mission. Of this there is ample evidence in the traveller's Journal already referred to, and it is borne out by the facts brought to light by Sir Rutherford Alcock, erstwhile minister at Peking, who knew Margary well, and by the narrative of Dr Anderson.* I have made use of all these in compiling my chronicle of this tragedy, and I would especially recommend the "Journal" to readers who appreciate the display of persistent, though unconscious courage.

As soon as the news of Mr Margary's fate reached our minister at Peking, a demand for ample reparation was made to the Tsungli Yamen. The demand was received by that body in much their usual way. Nothing was done but to talk and promise to act in good time, and three months elapsed without even an inquiry being ordered. At length, and entirely owing to the untiring efforts of Mr Wade, an edict was issued in June ordering Li Han Chang, the brother of Li Hung Chang, to proceed to Yunnan and deal with the matter. Li Han Chang, who at the time held the post of governor of Hunan, did not leave his Yamen

* A Narrative of the two Expeditions to Western China of 1863 and 1875 under Colonel Edward B. Sladen and Colonel Horace Brown.

at Hankow until August, while Mr Wade was busily engaged making arrangements for the despatch of Messrs Grosvenor, Davenport, Colborne, and Baker, to act as British commissioners and inquire fully into the story of the outrage.

The outcome of the inquiry was in full accord with Chinese traditions. The officials stood by each other. All agreed that the sole responsibility for the deed rested with the Hill tribes. It was seriously proposed that several of these should be seized and beheaded or handed over to the British to be dealt with as they pleased, but no other satisfaction could be obtained beyond the nominal suspension of the resident magistrate at Manwyne, who remained notwithstanding in full enjoyment of his office and power. Finally, the British commissioners came to the conclusion that the whole proceeding was a farce, and returned to Peking, bearing the offer of the lives of half-a-dozen criminals who had been guilty of some offence against Chinese law, and had been chosen by the mandarins as suitable scapegoats.

On receiving the report of his commissioners, Sir Thomas Wade refused to permit the taking of the lives of men who were not in any way connected with the crime it was sought to avenge, and the end of the year arrived without anything having been effected.

Early in 1876 the minister returned to the charge, and demanded the immediate settlement of the matter in dispute, under penalty of the cessation of diplomatic relations with this country. In order to prevent the Tsungli Yamen regarding this announcement as an

idle threat, Sir Thomas Wade quitted Peking, while the China squadron, which had been previously communicated with, entered the Gulf of Pechili in silent evidence of the fixed intention of the minister not to be fooled any longer.

As has always happened when the Chinese have mastered the fact that no refusal will be accepted, the mandarin came to their senses with exceeding rapidity. Li Hung Chang was instructed to come to an arrangement with the irate minister, and, on the ambassador refusing to come to Tientsin in order to conduct the necessary negotiations, Li Hung Chang had perforce to do what no mandarin had ever done, and seek the representative of Britain at his chosen resting-place, which happened to be Chifu.

The Chifu Convention constitutes another charter in the record of British rights in China. It includes compensation to the Margary family, the publication of the right of foreigners provided with passports to travel in China, and the placing of the responsibility for their safety on the viceroys and governors of the provinces in which they travel, the despatch of an embassy to London, the right of the British minister at Peking to send his officers to any part of the country to inquire into any crime alleged to have been committed against a British subject, the opening of Ichang, Wuhu, Wenchow, and Pakhoi as treaty ports, and various minor concessions for the improvement of trade relations between Great Britain and China. The convention also authorises the despatch of a British mission of exploration from Peking, through

Kansu and the Koko Nor, or Sechuan, into Tibet, and thence to India, or the reverse, as might be preferred. The convention was signed by Sir Thomas Wade and Li Hung Chang on the 13th September 1876, more than eighteen months after the murder of Margary.

The strained relations with Russia, caused by the Kuldja incident in 1879, afforded the opportunity for an exhibition of the influence which this country had gained in China. When the two countries were on the brink of war, Colonel Gordon, whose fame gained during the Taeping rebellion had not been forgotten, went from Bombay to Peking, and succeeded in arranging matters satisfactorily between the Tsungli Yamen and the Russian minister. While in Peking, Gordon also pleaded, at the suggestion of the Queen, for the reprieve of Chung How, the erstwhile ambassador to St Petersburg, who lay under sentence of death for having concluded a treaty with Russia which was deemed contrary to the interests of the country. Gordon attained the reprieve of Chung How. Nor was this the only occasion on which Great Britain has played the part of peace-maker on behalf of China. Just five years later, the war with France was brought to a close through the good offices of Sir Robert Hart, the Inspector-General of Imperial Maritime Customs.

An admirable instance of the methods employed by the Tsungli Yamen for the backing out of its engagements was afforded in 1884, when an application was made, on behalf of a member of the Indian Civil

Service, for the passports necessary to visit Tibet. The right of entering Tibet had been formally conceded to the British Government by the treaty of Chifu, and the authorities at Peking stood pledged to accord the necessary facilities. On receipt of the application, the Tsungli Yamen urged a number of excuses and pleaded that there was not the slightest reason for their wishing to withhold the facilities sought, but that it would be impossible to guarantee the safety of the British subjects who might venture into Tibet, and for this reason it was deemed wiser not to issue the desired passports. After considerable discussion, the matter was allowed to drop, and to this day Tibet remains closed to all the world except the Chinese, and a few privileged Russian travellers.

On the 22nd March 1885, Great Britain suffered a great loss by the death of Sir Harry Parkes, who passed away at his post in Peking, respected alike by the Europeans and the Chinese. Parkes had spent the whole of his eventful life in China, and had attained a knowledge of the people and the language which has been rarely equalled among Englishmen. While not perhaps so deeply versed in the Chinese classics as was Dr Legge, or as familiar with Celestial etymology as Dr S. W. Williams, Parkes acquired a familiarity with the colloquial, and, what was of more consequence, an understanding of the inner workings of the Chinese character, such as have never been surpassed in the case of any other European. It is not claiming too much for the memory of this pioneer of British influence in the Far East to state that, without Parkes's services,

our most notable achievements in China would have been impossible, and there can be little question but that without his intelligent co-operation the treaties of Nanking and Tientsin would never have been signed.

Sir Harry Parkes was succeeded at Peking by Sir Robert Hart, who relinquished his post of Inspector-General of Maritime Customs in order to take up the duties of British minister. The new guardian of British interests in China terminated his appointment, however, at the end of three months, for reasons which have never been made public; but of these the chief is supposed to have been a desire to counteract the effect of Russian policy in regard to foreign trade. Sir Robert returned to his former post, which he still holds, and he was succeeded at Peking by Sir John Walsham.

In 1887 the Chinese again turned their attention to the question of naval defence. The first arsenal in China had been founded by Dr now Sir Halliday Macartney as far back as 1863, and the model had been imitated at more than one port; but the Celestials lacked ships, and, in 1886, they bought in England five ironclads, which were destined to form the Northern Squadron of the Chinese fleet. Application was made to the British Admiralty for the services of an officer to act as naval instructor, and Captain Lang was engaged to accompany the squadron out from England, just as Captain Osborn had been twenty-four years before. And in the result the circumstances were very similar. Captain Lang found himself severely handicapped by the conceit and corruption of the mandarin. He was placed under the orders of the

Chinese admiral, and was permitted to exercise a limited control over the tuition of seamanship and gunnery, but in matters of organisation and expenditure he was not allowed to say a word. As soon as the Chinese had obtained a faint idea of the rudiments of navigation and gunnery, their arrogance prevented their remaining under the tuition of a "barbarian" instructor, and Captain Lang, like his predecessor, quitted China after a brief and unsatisfactory tenure of an impossible position. The record of the succeeding years proved uneventful in respect to the interests of Great Britain. The various risings directed against foreign influence in China have already been referred to, and the promulgation which followed of edicts in support of the trader and the missionary has been chronicled. The great floods which devastated North China in 1892, succeeded by the Shensi famine in the following year, did not assist in bringing about better relations with the hated foreigner, to whose malign influence many natives credited the visitations under which they suffered.

The great event of the years 1894 and 1895 was the war between China and Japan, and, while the rupture between the two countries did not directly affect Great Britain, it undoubtedly helped very greatly to bring about the situation which has attracted so much attention during the past twelve months.

As was expected by all who knew the Chinese, the unpreparedness of the country, the ignorance of its leaders, and the corruptness of the mandarin, combined to bring about a state of utter helplessness when

they were attacked by so capable a nation as the Japanese. The rout of the Celestials from first to last was complete, and China lay helpless at the feet of Japan.*

The conditions demanded as the price of peace were onerous, but not unwarranted; and the agreement of China to the terms proposed was readily conceded,

* The events of the Chino-Japanese war did not directly affect any of the European powers, and it is therefore not necessary that I should dwell at any length on the story of the campaign. The trouble arose over the state of affairs in Korea, a country in which the Japanese have always considered themselves interested. In consequence of internal dissensions at Seoul in June 1894, the Japanese troops entered the capital, and demanded various reforms. The Chinese immediately despatched considerable bodies of men by sea to Korea, and these succeeded in beating the Japanese at Asan on the 29th July, while a Japanese man-of-war encountered the *Kowshing*, a Chinese transport with 1500 troops on board; the latter was sunk, as was also, a few days later, the *Chen Yuen*, a Chinese ironclad. War was formally declared the following day. Li Hung Chang was made commander-in-chief of the Chinese forces. The Japanese worsted the Chinese and drove them out of Ping Yang on the 17th August. On this the Japanese took up the war in earnest. Vast sums were voluntarily subscribed by the nobles, and all available forces were sent to Korea and China, where victory was achieved at every move. The Chinese forces were surrounded and all but annihilated. A great naval engagement was fought between the rival fleets at the mouth of the Yalu River on the 19th September. The fleets were as nearly as possible equal, each side having 12 battle-ships and several torpedo craft. In the result, four of the Chinese ironclads were sunk, and all the rest disabled. The Japanese lost no vessels, and the victory was complete and unquestioned. Encouraged by their success, the Japanese despatched another army of 40,000 men, which was safely landed in the Liao-tong peninsula, north of Port Arthur. Kinchou and Talien Wan were speedily occupied. What remained of the Chinese fleet was captured while in the harbour of Port Arthur, which was subsequently taken.

On the 8th January 1895 a proclamation was issued at Seoul, renouncing the suzerainty of China over Korea. On the 12th February, Wei hai Wei was captured and occupied by the Japanese, while Admiral Ting, the Chinese commander, and his staff, committed suicide rather than surrender. Newchang was taken on 4th March. The Pescadores and Formosa were next attacked, but at the urgent request of China, backed by the support of the Powers, an armistice was agreed to on the 29th March. A treaty of Peace was subsequently signed at Saimonoseki on the 17th April.

the more so as Li Hung Chang, who conducted the negotiations, had just before come to an understanding with the Russian representative at Peking, by which the intervention of the Czar, with the object of preventing the permanent occupation of any part of China by Japan, was promised. Knowing that, under this arrangement, the most important clause in the treaty negotiated at Shimonoseki would never be carried out, Li Hung Chang signed a province away with alacrity. The treaty was signed by Li Hung Chang, Li Ching Tong, Count Ito, and Viscount Mutsu on the 17th April 1895, and ratified on the 10th May. The terms of the treaty included the declaration of the independence of Korea ; the cession of the Pescadores, Formosa, and the Liao-tong peninsula to Japan ; the payment of an indemnity of 200,000,000 taels ; and the opening of Shaszi, Chungking, Suchou, and Hangchau to foreign trade.

Six days after the signing of the treaty a joint-note was forwarded to Peking by the Russian, German, and French Governments, protesting against the cession of the Liao-tong peninsula ; and as Great Britain took no part in the discussion which ensued, Japan announced, on the 6th May, that she consented to abandon her claim upon the mainland.

The sequel to this arrangement will be well within the reader's recollection. But little more than two years after standing up against the partition of China, Russia, adopting as her excuse the seizure of Kiao-chau by Germany, herself took possession of the very territory which had been withheld from Japan, where-

upon the British Government suddenly reversed the policy they had all along adhered to, and took Wei Hai Wei as an equivalent.

It is impossible to deny that this country came very badly out of the diplomatic battle waged in China in the early part of this year. While Russia, victorious all along the line, had acquired everything she desired, and dominated China at Peking; and Germany, conscious of her might and independence, had taken what she demanded without a suggestion of asking leave, Great Britain, who had been the first to open up the Empire seriously to foreign commerce, and had by dint of her prestige dominated China for 50 years, stood for the first time in her history discredited in the eyes of the Celestials by the triumphant tactics of Russian emissaries and the haughty independence of a German admiral. The truth is that, like all oriental peoples, the Chinese can only be impressed by the display of power. So long as we thrashed them at intervals, they accorded us their respect. The moment they learned that our methods were not proof against the wiles of Russian diplomatists, or the insistency of German exploiters, our prestige began to dwindle away.

The lack of energy which has always characterised our intercourse with the Chinese is responsible for the inordinately slow progress which we have made in their confidence, and for the ease with which our representatives are worsted by rival diplomatists at Peking. As we have never taken pains to appreciate the Chinese character, it follows that we have never

rightly understood how to deal with the Chinese people. More than this, we have consistently refrained from bringing the experience we have obtained in India to bear upon our relations with the Celestials. Like all oriental peoples, the Chinese are amenable only to superior force. To reason with such as they is but to exhibit weakness. It is the inborn suspicion which is ever latent in the eastern mind, that has taught this remarkable race to avoid all intercourse with foreign nations, and to shut themselves up within their proper territory. It was only after we had shown the mandarin that we were a strong power and able to enforce our will, that they climbed out of their exclusiveness and consented to have relations with us at all. It was the subsequent discovery, that we did not always exercise our strength, which encouraged the Chinese to withdraw the pledges previously given. Had we been consistent in our dealings with them, had we shown them as we have shown the natives of India, that behind a policy of moderation there was an always-available force ready to be employed the very moment that any evasion of an understanding was attempted, the British record in China would have been a very different one, and the results attained infinitely greater and more valuable.

Nor are these idiosyncrasies of recent development. From the withdrawal of the East India Company monopoly to the present day, British action in China has been injudicious and inconsequent. The Government has rarely had a definite policy in view, and when a line of conduct has been determined on it has,

in nearly every instance, been abandoned ere sufficient time has been allowed for it to produce any tangible result. We have, it is true, had good men at the front, but their action has been cramped and their efforts counteracted by the eccentricities of the Government at home. Thus, as we have been recently worsted by the Chinese, the Russians, and the French in turn, so have we almost invariably been hoist by our own petard in our efforts to dominate the Far East without bringing either energy or ability to bear upon our task.

The political relations between Great Britain and China may be said to have commenced with the visit of Lord Macartney to Peking in 1793. Thus, the first mission sent to the Chinese capital by a Western Power was, upon the whole, a success; and we showed our appreciation of the fact by sending a subsequent mission to convey a number of costly gifts, as a bribe for further favours, to the Emperor's chief mandarin, Sung Tajin, thereby prejudicing the "Son of Heaven" against us, and causing our best friend at court to be deposed. The return of the bribes, accompanied by a sarcastic letter addressed to George III. by Kiaking, is a matter of history.* It was in the hope of undoing the mischief which arose from this incident that Lord Amherst was despatched to China in charge of a second embassy, in 1816. The Emperor, on hearing of the arrival of the ambassador at Tientsin, gave orders for him to be escorted to Peking with all haste, and, on his arrival, sent a high official to bid

* See Boulger, *History of China.*

him come to an immediate audience. Lord Amherst appears to have thought more about his personal dignity than of the importance of his mission, and refused to act upon the appointment made, on the plea that he was fatigued and required rest. A second summons from Kiaking met with a similar rebuff, and the Emperor, incensed at the repulse of his friendly overtures, ordered that the "barbarian" and his escort should be forthwith sent to the coast. Thus what might have proved a valuable factor in the relations between this country and China came to nought through the self-sufficiency of an opiniated ambassador. The attitude assumed by Lord Napier towards the viceroy of the two Kwan, on his appointment as superintendent of British trade, would have been amusing had it not been idiotic. Resenting the reserve of the mandarin with whom he was brought into contact, and ignoring the fact that he was without the force necessary to carry out his threats, he despatched a bombastic proclamation, which resulted in a state of siege being introduced into the British settlement. Whereupon the official who had brought about the trouble promptly retreated to Macao and left the Chinese masters of the situation. His successor, Captain Elliot, followed in his footsteps, and there can be no question but that want of tact and ignorance of the race with whom he had to deal were entirely responsible for the outbreak of the misnamed "Opium" war.

After the British fleet, which was sent out on the declaration of war in December 1839, had failed to

obtain a messenger who would carry a despatch to Peking, it was decided that the only course was to sail North and make for Tientsin. This was done, and the Emperor Taoukwang came speedily to his senses. Captain Elliot was received at the mouth of the Pei Ho by an accredited mandarin, who persuaded him that negotiations could be conducted far more satisfactorily at Canton than at Peking. Accordingly, the British agent surrendered all the advantage he had obtained, and withdrew his fleet southwards, with results which were most disastrous. And the simplicity exhibited on this occasion was more than once repeated during the operations on the Canton River. Nor are the terms of the Nanking treaty, which ended the war, suitable as between the rulers of two equal nations. No able diplomatist representing a first-class power would have consented to sign such a document.

The occupation of the treaty ports, opened under the treaty of 1842, passed off satisfactorily, and, for awhile, a good understanding subsisted. After a brief interval, however, the natives were secretly encouraged to cause trouble, in the hope of getting rid of the barbarian invaders. The city of Fuchow set the example by attacking foreigners who appeared in the streets. Assaults became common. Consular attachés were stoned, and the example set on the Min River was speedily imitated at Canton, where the vice-consul and two other Englishmen were set upon, pinioned, robbed, and grievously maltreated. Shortly after this, Commander Gifford was attacked at Whampoa, and Governor Davis, finding ordinary measures useless,

determined to exact reparation for these insults. He was promptly "snubbed" by Lord Aberdeen, the then Foreign minister, and had to forego his intention, with the result that a general rising against the English took place and caused much danger and loss. Six Englishmen were murdered in Canton in 1848, and, in the same year, three missionaries were mobbed and badly injured at Shanghai. Consul Alcock, who was at the time stationed on the Woosung River, finding that without rigorous measures there was little chance of the malefactors being punished, decided to take the matter into his own hands. He forthwith blockaded the port and refused to permit any grain junks to leave their moorings until the guilty persons were given over to justice. This move was immediately successful. Ten prisoners were brought to Shanghai and duly recognised by their victims, and they were severely punished. There can be no question as to the common-sense of Mr Alcock's procedure. He not only gave the Chinese a salutary lesson in manners, but did much to retrieve the reputation for weakness which had followed the vacillations of Lord Amherst and Captain Elliot. No sooner, however, were the events recorded reported to Mr Bonham, the British plenipotentiary at Hong-kong, than the consul was severely taken to task, and informed that Her Majesty's Government had peremptorily forbidden the taking of offensive operations without the previous sanction of the Colonial Secretary! And when, later on, Dr Bowring insisted on the opening of Canton to British trade, he was himself

"sententiously rebuked by that most sapient of Foreign Secretaries," the Earl of Malmesbury, "whose appointment to his responsible office was said to be one of Mr Disraeli's practical jokes." *

It would be easy to quote further instances of eccentricity on the part of the British Government, but one more will suffice. In 1858, notwithstanding the provisions of the treaty of Nanking, it was found to be unsafe to go even a mile beyond the city walls of Canton. Cases of robbery and assault were frequent, and the matter was referred to Lord Elgin, the High Commissioner entrusted with the settlement of disputes between British and Chinese. That enlightened diplomatist met the grievance brought before him by decreeing that, as it was unsafe to go a mile beyond the city, no British subject should go outside the walls, and this in face of the country round about having been declared open to the British by treaty. Well might Sir Harry Parkes write: "Oh, for the time when one may be able to bid adieu to official life, and take to growing cabbages!"

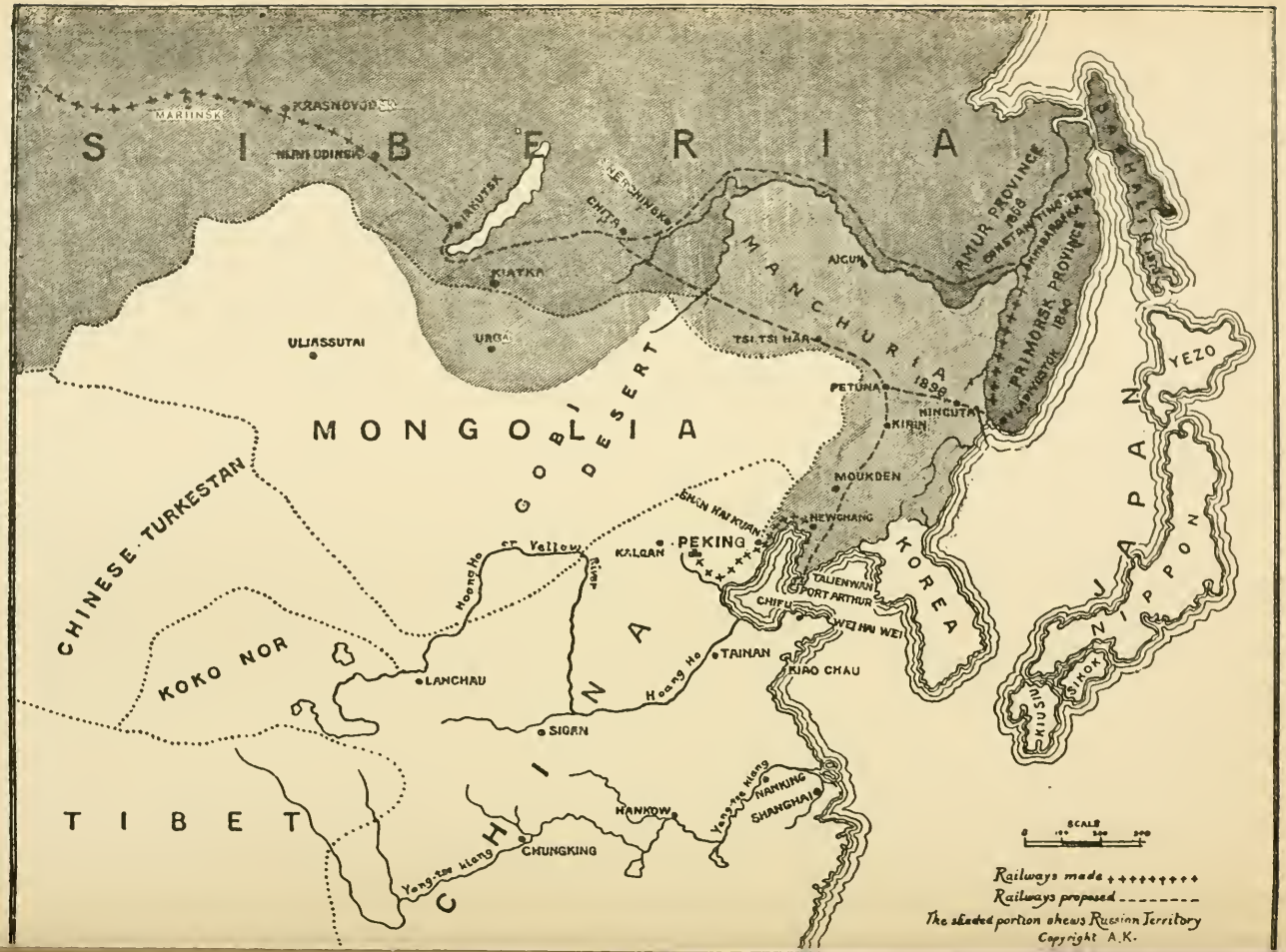
In the same year Lord Elgin succeeded in obtaining the treaty of Tientsin. The concessions made in this treaty were agreed to by the Chinese under fear of the war being prolonged, and possibly waged round the northern capital. There was not the slightest intention of observing the conditions one instant longer than could be helped. All that the Emperor desired was to get rid of his unwelcome visitors. Lord Elgin, with that extraordinary fatuous-

* *Life of Sir Harry Parkes.*

ness which has distinguished most of our high commissioners in China, blind to the real position and unmindful of the rights accorded him as the Queen's representative by the second article of the treaty, did not even demand an audience with Hienfung. Nor did he leave his army at Tientsin to secure the carrying out of the concessions. Accordingly, when his brother Mr Frederick Bruce reached the Pei Ho as minister, to exchange the ratifications of the treaty at Peking, he found the river impassable and had to retire amid the jibes of the people. In consequence of Lord Elgin's stupidity the whole operation had to be repeated. The high commissioner once more went North, and, after much opposition and the loss of a good many men, succeeded in reaching Peking, where he established himself early in the autumn of 1860. Desiring to return to the coast before the river became frozen, Lord Elgin having remained at the capital a little over a week, left a second time without having been received by the sovereign to whom he had been accredited.

Another instance of the spasmodic policy of this country in the Far East, is supplied by the record of the various occupations of the three little islands situated at the mouth of the Korean strait, and known as Port Hamilton. These islands were occupied by the British in 1840, and again in 1860. In 1885 they were once more held by our Navy, the British flag being hoisted on the 10th May. On the 27th February 1887 it was hauled down and the place finally evacuated.

Is it surprising, in the face of such a record of combined incapacity and pusillanimity, that the influence of this country in the Far East has waned? Up to the point reached in the above survey the struggle was a duel between the British and the Chinese. During recent years the simplicity of the contest has disappeared among the varied and conflicting interests of a number of competing nations. It is no longer a question of what England desires to obtain from the Chinese. The problem to-day is, what Russia, France, and Germany will permit China to accord; and the wily Celestial coquette, the very first to realise this position, does not hesitate to benefit by the number of her suitors, but plays one off against the other with admirable cleverness and *sang-froid*. And this very multiplicity of despoilers has proved China's greatest strength, for each, jealous of the others, resents any attempt, except his own, to dismember the Empire.


SIBERIA
MARIINSK
KRASNOYARSK
NIJNI UDINSK
IRKUTSK
CHITA
NERCHINSK
KIATKA
AIGUN
AMUR PROVINCE
CONSTANTINOVSK
KHABAROVKA
PRIMORSK PROVINCE
1858
1860
ULIASSUTAI
URGA
TSI TSI HAR
MANCHURIA
1898
PETUNA
NINGUTA
KIRIN
MONGOLIA
GOBI DESERT
MOUKDEN
SHAN HAI KUAN
NEWCHANG
CHINESE TURKESTAN
Hoang Ho or Yellow River
KALGAN
PEKING
TALIENWAN
PORT ARTHUR
CHIFU
WEI HAI WEI
KOREA
JAPAN
YEZO
NIPPON
KIUSIU
SHIKOK
KOKO NOR
LANCHAU
Hoang Ho
TAINAN
KIAO CHAU
SIGAN
CHINA
TIBET
HANKOW
Yang-tze Kiang
NANKING
SHANGHAI
CHUNGKING
Yang-tze Kiang
SCALE
Railways made
Railways proposed
The shaded portion shews Russian Territory
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CHAPTER VII.

THE RUSSIAN RECORD.

The opening up of political relations between Russia and China was due to the gradual absorption of Siberia by the rulers of the former country. The arid stretch of northern Asia was first explored by the Novgorodian merchants in the middle of the 16th century, and the subjection of the Tobol Tartars by Yermack in 1580 paved the way for the subsequent acquisition of the whole continent. Tobolsk was founded in 1587, Tomsk in 1604, Yakutsk in 1637, and Okhotsk in 1638. The first tidings of the discovery of a great waterway in the south-west of the new territory were brought by a traveller named Poyarkoff, who had made his way from Yakutsk to the sea in 1636, and the first survey was speedily followed by others, which led to the formation of a settlement at Albazin, despite the fact that this region was peopled by Chinese Tartars, who were under the rule of Peking. The Trans-Amur districts formed a portion of the Government of Heilungchiang, and the people strongly resented the presence of the Muscovite invaders. They accordingly rose, attacked the Russians, and drove them out of Albazin. After a strife which

extended over nearly forty years the treaty of Nerchinsk was signed in 1689, under which the Russians became bound to evacuate all the positions they had taken up, and Albazin was razed to the ground.

Triumphant over the discomfiture of the foreigners, the Chinese denied permission for the navigation of the Amur River, and Russians caught on Chinese territory were seized. The regulations respecting the observance of the frontier were exceedingly stringent. In 1694 four Russians were captured while hunting sables. They were sent to Nerchinsk for trial and punishment, and, in order to satisfy the Chinese, who appeared to be about to recommence operations against their neighbours, they were all beheaded as a warning to others. Cases of this description were frequent, though the trespassers were, as a rule, dealt with by their captors, instead of being handed over to the Russian authorities. In 1728, a further treaty dealing with the frontier question was made, and, satisfied with the assurances thus obtained, the Chinese appear to have become less strict in their surveillance over the boundary.

In the beginning of the present century, some Russian officers drew attention to the desirability of obtaining a concession of the right of navigating the Amur. A request was accordingly made to the Chinese in 1805, but it was promptly refused, and for a number of years the matter was allowed to rest. In 1847 General Muravieff, who was at that time governor-general of Eastern Siberia, decided that it was advis-

able to survey the river, in order to discover the possibility of using it as a means of communication with Kamtchatka; and, without communicating with the Chinese, he despatched an officer with a squadron of cossacks to explore the river. The officer interpreted his instructions in his own way, and, during the three years which he spent on the river, he founded several settlements, and, in 1851, encouraged by these, the captain of a Russian warship sailed up the Amur estuary and founded the towns of Nikolaievsk and Mariinsk. The movement thus set afoot proceeded apace. In 1853, Alexandrofsk and Konstantinovsk were established on the seaboard, both well within the limits of Chinese territory as defined by the treaty of Nerchinsk.

In 1854 the action of the Russians in navigating the Amur contrary to treaty was complained of by the mandarin. Muravieff replied that it was a matter of necessity to despatch stores to the Russian traders who had effected a friendly settlement among the Chinese, and that there was no other way of sending them victuals. The mandarin answered that they could not assent to this arrangement, and requested that the Russian vessels should be withdrawn to Nerchinsk. The Crimean war was being waged and the Black Sea was blockaded. It was impossible for the Russians to communicate with the Sea of Okhotsk, except by the Amur route, and Muravieff was not the man to stick at trifles. He accordingly fitted out an expedition, which comprised a large flotilla of barges conveying 1000 cossacks and many guns. This he accompanied down

river without being interfered with by the Chinese. In the following year three more expeditions were despatched from Nerchinsk, comprising 3000 cossacks, some hundreds of colonists, stores, and provisions. Russian ports were established along the whole of the north bank of the river. The Chinese protested but were helpless. The Government at Peking could do nothing, owing to the inroads of the Taeping rebels, which necessitated the retention in South China of all available troops. Realising the arrival of the psychological moment, the Russians sent a formal demand for the "rectification" of the frontier. Powerless and paralysed by fear, the mandarin had no choice but to agree, and, in 1858, the treaty of Aigun was signed, ceding to Russia the whole of the Chinese territory north of the Amur. A decree was then issued at St Petersburg, announcing the acquisition of the new territories, under the title of the Amur provinces, with an extent of nearly a million square miles.

Having thus obtained possession of all the country north of the great river, the Muscovite intruders cast longing eyes towards that which lay on the south, and when, in 1860, Peking was in a state of panic, with the French and English at its gates, and a large portion of the Empire in the hands of the rebels, General Ignatieff had little difficulty in obtaining, without any return whatever, the cession of all the territory between the Ussuri River and the sea, ranging north and south from the Amur to the Korean frontier. Having thus acquired an addition to her Empire nearly half as big

as her European dominions, Russia rested that she might digest what she had gorged. Contrary to expectation, no attempt was made to acquire inner Manchuria or the Liao-tong peninsula, and for ten years the relations between China and her nearest neighbour were friendly.

While the Russian record on the Amur serves as an admirable example of the methods always pursued in her expansion, one cannot but admit that in this particular instance the responsibility rests with China, owing to the absurd policy of exclusion practised by the Manchu rulers. The territories bordering on the Amur River were sparsely populated and they were generally neglected. Yet access was denied to all foreigners, and the right of navigating the waterway, which alone supplied a direct and convenient route between inner Siberia and the sea, was withheld. Nor were these absurd restrictions limited to foreigners. The Chinese themselves were not permitted to emigrate into Manchuria, and the natives were prevented from crossing the Sungari. The right of trading on the Amur was moreover restricted to ten merchants, who were licensed for that purpose at Peking.* It is, in view of these facts, unreasonable to blame Russia for having acted as any other nation would have been impelled to do under similar circumstances.

While the events chronicled above were in progress, the interests of Russia in another direction were being equally advanced. During some of the frontier disputes which continued for so long between the two nations

* Ravenstein, *The Russians on the Amur.*

the Chinese had taken prisoners a number of Russians, and these had been conveyed to Peking, where they were settled in a specially allotted quarter of the city. The prisoners appear, upon the whole, to have been well treated, and to have been accorded a considerable amount of liberty. After the signing of the treaty of Nerchinsk in 1689, the Russians determined to make a fresh attempt to open up satisfactory diplomatic relations with the Chinese, and one Everhard Ysbrand Ides, as has already been stated in the chapter dealing with foreign relations, went on an embassy to Peking in 1692. Ides succeeded in obtaining several privileges for his country, among them the permission to send a priest to Peking to minister to the Russians who had become settled in the Chinese capital. The priest duly arrived in 1698, and, in 1727, he was reinforced by several others, deputed to educate the children of the erst-while cossacks, and to study the Chinese language. A church and mission were founded and consecrated in 1732, and the Russian colony prospered exceedingly, being allowed to enjoy free intercourse with the natives. By these means not only were the Russians able to study both the language and the people of China, but they succeeded in living down the marked prejudice which was formerly entertained by the natives towards all foreigners, and there can be no question but that the diplomatic successes which followed were largely due to the good influence exerted by these settlers.

The most direct route between the cities of Russia and Siberia, and Peking is that supplied by the caravan track across the great Desert of Gobi, *via*

Kiakhta, Urga, and Kalgan. This commercial highway has been traversed by traders for centuries, and its use by Russian merchants, while not being officially recognised, had not been prohibited. The first authorisation of the Kiakhta route occurs in the treaty concluded between Russia and China at Tientsin, shortly after that concluded at Aigun, in 1858. By this the equality of both Governments is recognised, the right to maintain an embassy at St Petersburg conceded, a number of treaty ports are opened, and the privilege is granted of sending a Russian consul to reside at each. Authority is given for the renewal of the clerical mission at Peking whenever necessary, and its members are expressly authorised to proceed between Russia and Peking "either by land or sea." In addition to these enactments, a postal service is decreed between Peking and Kiakhta every fortnight,—the journey to be performed in fifteen days. Considerable as are the concessions made by this treaty to Russian interests in China, they are further augmented by a second treaty executed at Peking in 1860, which forms the Magna Charta of the Russians in China.

The main provisions of the treaty of Peking are—the cession to Russia of Lakes Balkash and Issik Kul in Turkestan; the appointment of a commission for the rectification of the frontier on the Ussuri River; the establishment of free trade on all common frontiers; the concession of the right to trade between Kiakhta and Peking, and to appoint a Russian consul at Urga, and of liberty for all Russian merchants, provided with passports, to travel throughout China,

provided they do not congregate in numbers greater than 200. Finally, commercial dealings are granted total immunity from restrictions of every kind. It will thus be seen that the Russian treaty of Peking is a very important document, according, as it does, far more extensive rights to the subjects of the Czar than have been granted to the subjects of any other ruler.

In 1863, a rebellion broke out among the Mahommedans of Jungaria, who avowed their intention of freeing themselves from the Chinese rule. The struggle was a lengthy and a sanguinary one, and continued over a series of years, fortune sometimes giving an advantage to the rebels and sometimes to the Tartar generals charged with the suppression of the revolt. Jungaria is situated on the border-land between Chinese and Russian Turkestan, and the contest was watched with considerable interest by the Russians in the district of Semirechensk, where there was a strong body of cossacks engaged in opening negotiations with Yakoob Khan, who had succeeded in creating a short-lived independent state in Central Asia. In 1870 the Chinese were completely worsted by the Tarantchis, who, having disposed of their erstwhile enemy, set to work fighting among themselves, and, after the district had continued in a state of relative anarchy for nearly eight years, a Russian force marched into Kuldja, and occupied the valley of the Ili. This action on the part of Russia was formally notified to Peking, the explanation given being that the step had become necessary in order to

restore that order which the Chinese appeared incapable of preserving, and which was threatening to disturb the tribes within Russian territory.

The Chinese had no option but to assent to the occupation, which it was announced would only be of a temporary nature, because owing to the great distance between Ili and Peking, and the waste of the Desert of Gobi which lay between, communication was difficult, and the despatch of a force capable of dealing with the trouble was practically impossible. The authorities at Peking did not, however, remain idle. They despatched relays of military to support the general Tso Tung Tang, who commanded the operations in Jungaria, and that officer proved himself a capable leader in the war he waged against the rebels. His efforts were greatly aided by the sudden death of Yakoob Beg which occurred early in 1877, and the split of his people into two parties which followed immediately afterwards. By slow degrees the lost territory was reclaimed. Yarkand was recaptured in December. The fall of Kashgar followed, and by the end of the year the rebel forces had been finally dispersed.

Peace being restored, the Chinese sought the restoration of Ili, which was still occupied by the Russians. In order to achieve this, the mandarin Chung How, who had previously been on a special mission to Europe, was despatched to St Petersburg to negotiate with regard to the control of Kuldja and the surrounding territory. Chung How arrived in St Petersburg in 1879, and, after remaining in Russia for some months, he had with the Czar at his

southern palace a series of interviews which resulted in his signing the treaty of Livadia. By this Russia surrendered the Kuldja Valley, but retained the neighbouring Teke territory, thus continuing to command the approaches to Kashgar. Chung How stood out, however, on the question of a big indemnity, which was demanded to repay the expense of the occupation, and succeeded in getting the sum reduced to 5,000,000 roubles.

On reaching Peking, and seeking to obtain a ratification of the treaty he had agreed to, Chung How was arrested and cast into prison under sentence of death, while China repudiated the treaty and began to prepare for war. In the hope of arranging matters, the Marquis Tseng was ordered to St Petersburg, and General Gordon, whose influence with the Chinese had been very great ever since he had quelled the Taeping rising, went to Peking to exert his powers of reasoning with the mandarin in the cause of peace. The result of these measures was satisfactory. Chung How was reprieved, and fresh negotiations were opened up between the two countries.

After a lengthy series of palavers, the Marquis Tseng succeeded in negotiating the treaty of St Petersburg, under which Russia consented to give back practically all the territory in dispute. The indemnity to be paid was, however, considerably increased, and a clause was inserted according to Russia the right of navigation on the rivers of Manchuria. The treaty was signed in 1881, and the Russian forces were withdrawn from Ili the same year

From 1881 until 1895 Russia confined her operations in Chinese territory to the obtaining of information by means of surveys, and to cultivating the mandarin as opportunity arose. There can be little doubt but that, even at the time of the Kuldja difficulty, Russia had begun to formulate schemes for the future spoliation of the Empire, schemes which even to-day are not realised by other nations, and which, some day, will probably startle the world as they are gradually disclosed. During this interval of fourteen years a large number of Russian emissaries have penetrated to the innermost recesses of Chinese territory. They have crossed the eighteen provinces in every direction, have surveyed the country geologically and geographically, have drawn up schemes for railways, explored the almost unknown territories of the Koko Nor, visited every corner of Korea, and even penetrated into the fastnesses of Tibet. The result of this activity is an intimate acquaintance with the land and the people such as is possessed by no other nation, and a number of plans of campaign are all cut and dried, ready to be acted on whenever the time arrives.

And so Russia remained silent, occupied in the maturing of her schemes and only awaiting the opportunity of putting them into force. In 1895 she was tempted to make her voice heard, though not ostensibly on her own behalf. The occasion was the conclusion of the Chino-Japanese war and the signing of the treaty of Shimonoseki, which marked the termination of hostilities. The second clause in this treaty accords the cession to Japan of the Liao-tong peninsula, with

certain neighbouring territory, in perpetuity, but this change of ownership was vetoed by Russia who declared that she would not tolerate the partition of China, or the holding of territory on the Continent of Asia by Japan. In this last view, Russia was supported by France and Germany, and the Japanese, quickwitted enough to appreciate the situation, and not feeling sufficiently strong at that time to enforce the carrying out of the treaty by a declaration of war against three first-class powers, consented to forego this portion of her gains. Recent happenings have shed a new light upon the disinterestedness of Russia's zeal for China, and to-day the Czar, besides holding the province which, by the rights of war, belongs to Japan, has earmarked the whole of the continent between that province and Russian soil.

The acquisition of the Liao-tong peninsula by Russia in the early part of the present year will be within the recollection of all my readers. I propose, therefore, merely to summarise briefly the events which culminated in so large an addition to the Russian Empire and to Russian influence in North China.

A complete understanding of the recent developments in North China is only to be obtained by going back a couple of years. The record commences in May 1896, when Li Hung Chung, the veteran first mandarin of the Chinese Empire, was despatched to Moscow to be present as the special envoy of the Son of Heaven at the coronation of the Czar. Before leaving China the Viceroy Li had several interviews with Count Cassini, the Russian minister at Peking,

and there is not the slightest question but that the Count, duly instructed by Prince Lobanow, who was at the time the minister responsible for the foreign policy of Russia, made certain proposals to the mandarin, which took the form of a series of bargains concerning three interested parties, these being: the Czar, the Emperor of China, and Li Hung Chung. After a number of interviews an understanding was arrived at and duly set out in the form of a convention, which was signed by both parties on the understanding that it should be kept absolutely secret. Neither the clauses nor the exact terms of this convention have been made public, but it is well known that in general effect it provided for the support of Russia against Japanese aggression, in return for the according of certain facilities by China for the extension of Russian interests and the construction of railways in Manchuria. There is little reason to doubt that Li Hung Chung did profit to a considerable extent by this negotiation, but the arrangement made between him and Count Cassini remained, like the rest of the transaction, unpublished. Thus, it came about that the Chinese envoy left for Russia with a secret treaty in his pocket, which had been already agreed to by himself and the representative of the Russian Government. It has been asserted that the clauses of this secret treaty had been discussed between the mandarin and the Russian minister more than a year before, and that it was with the full knowledge that the cession of the Liao-tong peninsula would not be permitted by Russia, that the viceroy of Chili assented to the demand made by

Japan. Be this as it may, the treaty was duly executed and deposited in the archives of the Russian Foreign Office.

For nearly two years this secret agreement remained unknown and unsuspected. The announcement of the contract arrived at with Russia for the construction of the Manchurian Railway attracted some attention to the relations existing between the two countries, and at the close of 1896 there arose a whisper of an understanding between the neighbouring empires. But nothing definite leaked out, and it was not until the close of last year that the facts became known.

In November 1897, it became known that two German missionaries had been killed in the province of Shantung, and on the 14th November a German squadron took possession of Kiaochau and landed troops, who at once occupied the town. After a brief negotiation the place was leased to Germany, and steps were at once taken to fortify the harbour and turn the place into a German colony.

The occupation of Kiaochau afforded Russian diplomatists the excuse they sought. On the pretence that the acquisition of a naval base by Germany in North China would upset the political *status quo*, and affect adversely Russian interests, she occupied Port Arthur on the 18th December, and a month later demanded compensation for the concession accorded to Germany. The diplomatic struggle which followed this action of Russia's affects the whole aspect of the Far Eastern Question, and I hope to deal with it in a later chapter. The outcome of the position taken up by Russia, was

the cession, under a nominal lease, of the Liao-tong peninsula, and the extension of the railway concession already granted for the construction of railways in Manchuria. Port Arthur was finally handed over to Russia on the 25th of March 1898, and the results of this transaction have yet to be appreciated.

Whatever may be urged against Russian diplomacy in regard to its unscrupulousness, it would be unjust to belittle either its thoroughness or its foresight. Within twelve hours of the hoisting of the Russian standard on the heights of Port Arthur, the town was invested by some twenty thousand troops, and the Chinese officials were given a decidedly broad hint to make themselves scarce without delay. It was only after this well-conceived *coup* had been accomplished that formal notification was made to foreign Powers; and while the British Government was struck with amazement at the unexpected development, the more able advisers of the Czar were busy putting into execution the carefully-thought-out plans which had been matured fifteen months before, when it was decided to alter the then existing plan of the Trans-Siberian Railway.

The steps taken by Russia on the 23rd of March last were outwardly unimportant. Actually, they amounted to the informal annexation of Manchuria. While any statement to this effect would probably be met by the diplomatists of St Petersburg with a suave denial, the fact remains that Manchuria is not only to all intents and purposes a Russian province, but is already invested by Russian troops, pending the arrival

of the time when it shall be opened up and developed by Russian capital. The policy of Russia has always been one of passive insistence, and her most recent triumph is no exception to the rule. The acquisition of Kiaochau by the Germans, the urging of claims by France, the imagined humility of Great Britain, and, most important of all, the threatened collapse at Peking, all helped to bring along the psychological moment; and, her position having been strengthened by many months of careful preparation, Russia seized her opportunity and announced that she had leased Port Arthur and Talienwan. The true significance of this announcement will be better appreciated after a glance at the accompanying map.

It will be seen that the Liao-tong peninsula forms the thin end of the wedge of Manchuria. It will be noted that, with the exception of the port of Yingtze, serving Newchang at the head of the gulf, Port Arthur is the one important seaport, and that the country is bounded by Russia on two sides, while it is bordered by the Mongolian steppe and Korea on the others. Ever since the annexation of Eastern Manchuria in 1854, Manchuria itself has been at the mercy of Russia. Her erstwhile seaboard on the Pacific has become the Prim Orsk Province, from which she is overawed by Vladivostock and Nova Kylosk. On the north-west, where the Ussuri meets the Amur, she is held in check by the garrison of Khabaroffka, capital and seat of government of the maritime territory, and commanding the waterways by which the greater portion of the country is approachable. On the north,

separated from the Helung province only by the width of the Amur, is Blagovieschensk, the capital of a Russian Province, while on the north-west, but a hundred miles or so from the lake of Dalai Nor, lies Nerchinsk, with its famous silver mines, and its more notorious penal settlement. Had the whole disposition of country been planned by Russian intelligence, it could not have been better fitted for the work which has so recently been begun.

But the Muscovite is not accustomed to rest satisfied with a diplomatic success. The acquisition of a territory more than three times as big as Great Britain is not by itself satisfying to his ambition. He seeks to benefit commercially as well as politically by his investments, and above all aims at securing that which he has grasped. And so there has been produced an agreement made in 1896, which proves to be a concession for the construction of a railway across Manchuria, and since the railway authorised in this document is specifically described as being between the Russo-Chinese frontier and Nicolsk near Vladivostock, a clause is added to the treaty under which the Liao-tong ports are leased, authorising a further railway from a point on the Trans-Manchurian line near Petuna to Talienwan and Port Arthur.

These railways are notable for several things, but most of all for the extraordinary clauses to be found in the agreement which has been drawn up between the Russian and Chinese authorities for their construction. The agreement in question is made nominally between the Chinese Government and the Russo-Chinese

Bank. By it the various lines shown on the accompanying map are authorised between the Russian frontier near the Dalai Nor, and Nicolsk, by way of Tsitsihar, Hulan, and Ninguta, with a southern branch from Tsitsihar, *via* Petuna, Kirin, and Moukden, to Talienwan and Port Arthur, with a further branch from Moukden through Chin Chow and Peitaho to Shan Hai Kuan, whence the railway is already working to Tientsin and Peking. A little study of the map will serve to show the extreme ability with which these lines have been designed. A study of a physical map of the country will show that, except in the immediate neighbourhood of Kirin and Moukden, the levels will be fairly easy and the engineering work comparatively light. The work is to be put in hand forthwith. The steel rails are ordered from America, the labour, mostly supplied from the convict prisons at Nerchinsk, is to be paid for by the grant of a tithe of the gross earnings according to the market rate, and the supervision afforded by Russian soldiers, who are already on the way to take their part in the ruling of the new Russian province.

The chief clauses in the railway agreement which call for remark are those relating to the questions of authority and finance. The work is nominally to be performed, and the line managed, by a company known as the Eastern Chinese Railway Company, which will have a share capital of 5,000,000 roubles and a bond capital of an unknown amount—the "amount, and time, and condition of issuing" these bonds being in the

hands of the Russian Government. The concession to the company is for eighty years, after which the line shall become the property of the Chinese Government, —presuming, that is, that there is a Chinese Government in eighty years' time. Shares in this exclusive company can only be held by Russian or Chinese subjects. Among the obligations undertaken by the railway concessionnaires, are those for maintenance, the despatch of trains, the attainment of a speed not less than that run on the Trans-Siberian line, the establishment of telegraphic communication along the entire line, the fixing of tariffs only with the approval of the Russian Government, and the conveyance of parcels and letter posts. The Chinese authorities on their side agree that all passengers' luggage conveyed into Manchuria from China shall be exempt from customs or import duties, that the rates charged for fares or for goods shall be free from Chinese taxation, that all goods imported into China by rail, or exported from China to Russia, shall pay one-third less import or export duty than that charged on foreign goods passing through a seaport, and finally that goods destined to pass into the interior of the country shall be accorded a specially favourable tariff as compared with that regulating the transit dues of other countries. It may be doubted whether a more ingenious agreement, or one securing greater advantages at the cost of other countries, has ever been drawn up. Its direct effect will be the closing of Manchuria to British trade, while the moral effect of England being refused the most-favoured-nation treatment obtained by Russia will

unquestionably tend to damage permanently our already threatened prestige in the East.

With such a policy persistently carried out, it will be small wonder if Russian influence becomes paramount in China. Of the result of her policy in Manchuria there can be no question. The country is undeveloped, but it is rich and fertile, possessing vast stores of coal and iron, copper and gold, while the mountain sides and the uplands of Kirin are richly furnished with timber, including oak, elm, and walnut. The mineral wealth of the country is, however, practically unworked, while owing to the absence of proper roads or means of transport the timber trade is neglected. The population of the neglected country, amounting to some twenty-three millions, may be roughly divided into two broad classes, the agriculturists and the brigands. The latter have always preyed upon the former, and it is by no means an unusual sight to come upon a farmer tilling his land with a loaded gun slung at his back. The three provinces of Manchuria are populated in inverse ratio to their extent. Liao-tong, the southern province, contains 50,000 square miles, with a population of 12,000,000; Helung Kiang, the northern province, boasts of 140,000 square miles, but only 2,000,000 inhabitants; while Kirin, midway between the two, is populated proportionately to its size, having an area of 90,000 square miles and 8,000,000 people.

But the existing order is doomed and a new régime prepared. The people will be trained and drilled until they are fit to fight for their Russian masters. The

country will be settled by emigration from the crowded territories of Southern Russia. Brigandage will be put down with a strong hand, the better-class population will be educated, and gradually "Russianised" by precept, example, and intermarriage, until Manchuria will have followed Tashkent, Samarkand, and Beruk, and become an integral part of the Muscovite Empire.

The activity of Russia in China has, during the past eight months, been directed to the completion of the achievements recorded at the beginning of the year, while some considerable attention has been directed to the counteracting of British influence in China. While huge shipments of men and stores have followed one another at short intervals from the Black Sea ports to Port Arthur and Talienwan, the concession for the Lu-han Railway, to be described,* has been practically taken over by the Russo-Chinese Bank, and a strong protest has been made against the holding by a British syndicate of the concession for the continuation of the Northern Railway to Newchang. These matters will be discussed later on. The present chapter is intended only to place on record the gradual growth of Russian influence, and the steady extension of Russian territory in China, and the record is now complete.

It only remains to glance at the new Russian stronghold, and to enquire whether Port Arthur is capable of being made as impregnable a base as is generally supposed. Geographically, the harbour is most favourably situated. Its position is well adapted for the de-

* See page 305.

fence of the Gulf of Pechili, the entrance is easy to guard, and the harbour is protected from the weather. There are, however, corresponding drawbacks which detract somewhat from its strength. The area of deep water is small and lies close to the entrance, necessitating the mooring of big vessels in full view, and within range from the sea outside. The entrance to the bay is extremely narrow, averaging only 40 yards in width, and the entrance or departure of a fleet must always be attended with danger. This risk materially detracts from the value of the port as a harbour of refuge, and renders it a simple matter for an opposing fleet to render the passage of the entrance practically impossible. In addition to this difficulty, the entrance to the bay is ice-bound two months out of the twelve. It has been pointed out by Lieutenant-Colonel Rheinhold Wagner* that, owing to the formation of the coast line on the land side of Port Arthur, it would be a most difficult matter to maintain communication with the rear. The isthmus is extremely narrow, in one part only 18 miles, and an enemy landing here could easily command the situation by cutting off all communications, while coal must be brought by sea. Regarded from a purely strategical standpoint, Port Arthur has been very greatly over-estimated. Its military strength, owing to the heights by which it is commanded, is considerable, but its capacity, as a naval base, is indifferent, its accommodation limited, and its situation open to attack. It is indeed questionable whether the practical utility of Port Arthur is suf-

* *Militär-Wochenblatt*, No. 6 of 1898.

ficiently great to repay its owner for the gigantic expenditure entered upon for its armament and defence.

The position secured by Russia in Northern China is the cause of much jubilation at St Petersburg. The most enthusiastic of Russian tchinoviks was scarcely prepared for so triumphant a progress all along the line of Manchurian aggression, as has been achieved, and it is this very success that has caused one or two displays of recklessness, notably in the case of M. Pavloff at Peking, which would not otherwise have occurred. It had been expected that the seizure of Port Arthur would cause complications with England backed by Japan, and it was owing to this expectation that such precautions were taken to have men and armament available for the defence of Port Arthur before taking the final step. The province of Manchuria is to-day fully secured, and Port Arthur is already practically impregnable. It could be starved out, perhaps, but to do this would necessitate the holding of the belt of land behind Talienwan, and, with the large number of men available for the defence, this would require a very strong force indeed. Russia is therefore at ease in respect to her China base, and for the present is resting on her oars, while she continues to add to her strength in Manchuria and devotes her energies to the obtaining of further facilities for future aggrandisement. The methods she adopts for the consolidation of her position and the exclusion of her rivals are as admirable as they are impudent. One day her emissaries protest against a concession being given to Great Britain ; another they demand the exclusive

right of training Chinese sailors in the Chinese Navy ; on a third it is formally announced that only vessels manned exclusively by Chinese or Russian sailors will be permitted to trade with Port Arthur. In short, Russia takes steps in regard to British interests in China which she would not dare to take against Germany, for she is a good judge of human nature and knows how much each of her rivals will stand.

SOUTH CHINA: SHOWING THE FRENCH SPHERE.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE FRENCH RECORD.

The history of French development in China is mainly interesting on account of the influence it has had on British trade ; an influence which has been slight, only because of the shortsightedness of our former ally. Without ever having attempted to secure a footing for herself in China Proper, except when acting in conjunction with the British expeditions of 1858 and 1860, France has absorbed nearly the whole of the former dependencies of China in the Indo-Chinese peninsula, and to-day stands jealously menacing British interests in Yunnan.

The record of France in China dates from the opening up of intercourse with the Celestials by the Roman Catholic missionaries who found their way to the Far East during the 17th century. The existence of formal relations between the two countries may be said to date from the reign of Louis XVI., who in 1787 received a visit from a trusted minister of the then King of Annam. This ambassador had been sent at the suggestion of a Jesuit missionary to seek the aid of the King of France in re-establishing his master's authority against the rebels who, at that time, were

overrunning Annam and threatening to overthrow its ruler. Louis agreed to this request, and despatched a supply of arms with some French officers and a naval force sufficient to restore the king's authority, accepting in return the cession of the peninsula of Tourane and the island of Pulo Condore, together with the right to station consuls in any part of the kingdom of Annam. The outbreak of the French Revolution prevented Louis from taking advantage of the privileges accorded him, but the compact signed at Versailles in 1787 was not forgotten. In 1802 a French gunboat appeared off Canton to protect the interests of the merchants there, and the flag of the Republic was hoisted, but it was not allowed to remain in evidence, and the French retired without having achieved anything. In 1828 a French merchant vessel was wrecked off Cochin China and the crew massacred by the natives. This outrage became the subject of lengthy negotiations between France and China, and, in the end, seventeen pirates were executed, and the French were accorded the right to station a consul at Canton.

In 1844, a special mission was despatched from Paris to Peking, and a treaty signed between the two countries, by which trading rights, similar to those obtained by the English two years earlier, were conceded, and the right of settlement at the treaty ports was placed on record. The joint action of the French and British in 1858 brought further concessions in the French treaty of Tientsin and the subsequent convention signed at Peking in 1860.

After the conclusion of peace in China Proper, the

French fleet went to Hué, to exact reparation for a number of outrages which had been perpetrated by the Annamese on the Christian missionaries. A big battle was fought in April 1859, in which the natives were dispersed, and, after a lingering war which lasted for over two years, peace was signed on the 3rd June 1862, the conditions being the toleration of Christianity and the cession of the province of Saigon at the mouth of the Mekawng River.* Three years later, the King of Cambodia placed himself under the protection of France, which thus obtained dominion over the whole of Cochin China.

It was soon discovered by the French explorers who hastened to visit the newly-acquired territory that the Mekawng was not navigable, and that what was supposed to be a highway into China Proper, was useless for the purpose of extending trade; but it was reported about the same time that another river had been discovered higher up the coast, which undoubtedly flowed from across the Chinese border, and which was deemed navigable.† The river in question turned out to be the San koi, or Red River, which was thoroughly explored in 1870 by Mons. Dupuis, who demonstrated the value of the stream as a highway into Yunnan. Eager to avail themselves of this discovery for the furtherance of their plans, the French sought a fresh treaty at the court of Hué, and in 1874 this was obtained, with the result that the whole of Annam became a French protectorate, with full rights of

* Romanet du Caillaud, *Histoire de l'Intervention au Tongking.*

† Garnier, *Voyage d'Exploration en Indo-Chine.*

development. The nominal independence of Tu Duc, the ruler of Annam, was guaranteed by this treaty, which repeats the clauses respecting the toleration of Christianity which appeared in that of 1862.

Consistent in her ambition to find a high road to the wealthy districts of China which she could keep to herself, France determined to lose no time in opening up the country thus placed at her disposal. From her calculations, however, one important factor had been omitted. The whole of Annam was a dependency of Peking, and as such paid an annual tribute to the "Son of Heaven." Before any trade could be developed with the interior of Yunnan, it would be necessary to obtain the consent of the Chinese Government, and when the representatives of that country reminded France of this inconvenient fact by inquiries made simultaneously of the Government at Paris and the French minister at Peking, she replied officially that there was not the slightest intention of doing anything which could injuriously affect the rights or the interests of China.

The arrival of numbers of French adventurers, accompanied by military forces, opened Tu Duc's eyes as to what was going on, and he remonstrated with the officers who had stationed themselves at Hué, at the same time communicating to the Chinese Government his desire to remain under the ægis of Peking. The position in Annam thus became strained, and hostilities would probably have ensued early in 1883 but for the sudden death of the king.

The policy declared by Tu Duc was eagerly taken up by the people, who resented the overbearing ways

of the French. Officers were insulted, Colonists attacked, and Commandant Riviere, who represented in the peninsula the Government of Paris, took the town of Naomdink on the 11th April, and, determined to make the most of his advantage, moved on Hanoi, the capital of Tonkin, which he seized without much difficulty. As soon as he and his men had taken possession of Hanoi, he was surrounded by the Annamese, supported by a large army of Chinese fighting men, who laid siege to the place. It was captured, and Riviere, with his officers and men, was put to the sword. Riviere was succeeded by General Bouch, who advanced on Hanoi, re-took the town, fortified it, and succeeded in repulsing the enemy with great loss.

These events had by this time served to irritate greatly the Peking authorities, by whose instructions the Marquis Tseng left Paris, but on the advice of Li Hung Chang, whose conduct during the Taeping rebellion had made him a power whose counsels were always respected, negotiations were resumed, and finally on the 11th May 1884 a treaty was signed at Tientsin, under which China agreed to withdraw from Tonkin, and to recognise the treaties between France and Annam, as well as to open the frontiers of Yunnan, Kwangsi, and Kwangtung to commerce, on the understanding that those frontiers would be respected, and that France would continue to uphold the suzerainty of China over Annam.

In the negotiation of this treaty, favourable as it was throughout to the pretensions of France, the

advisers of the Paris Government had not allowed for the wiles of Chinese diplomacy. Thus far all had gone satisfactorily. The French, in their haste to achieve the conquest of territory, which, while ruled by a native king, owed suzerainty to the Emperor of China, had frightened the Governments both of Annam and of China into the cession of the province in dispute. But, on their proceeding to utilise the rights which had been accorded, difficulties were raised, and, on the appearance of a French force before the town of Langsen, which it was intended to occupy, the officer in command was informed that he could not enter the town until certain necessary arrangements had been made.

This protest was promptly disregarded by Captain Dugenne, who attacked the town without even communicating with his superiors, and Langsen was occupied without difficulty by the French on the 23rd June. On receipt of this news, the Peking authorities denied the right of the French to enter the city and ordered its evacuation forthwith, and, on this demand reaching the French commander at Hanoi, he decided to continue the war with all possible energy. A demand was thereupon sent to Peking for the immediate evacuation of all the frontier forts and the payment of an indemnity of ten million sterling. The French fleet, under Admiral Courbet, proceeded northwards, and Admiral Lespés moved on Formosa and destroyed Kelung. An offer of the cession of the forts and the payment of a reduced indemnity was refused, as was also the pro-

posed mediation of the powers. The French ambassador was withdrawn from Peking, and war declared.

The Franco-Chinese war of 1884–85 had been entered on, by the Western nation at least, under a misapprehension. The Government of Paris had made light of the impending operations on the strength that China was merely a barbarous nation, a *quantité negligeable.* It was the duty of France to mete out a merited punishment to a lot of savages, and, in order to do this, it was ordered that the Chinese should be attacked on their own coasts.

Admiral Courbet reached the Min River on the 23rd August, and, having seized the Chinese fleet which had taken shelter there, sailed up to Fuchow, captured the forts, and destroyed the Arsenal. On the 8th October, Kelung was taken and Formosa blockaded. A battle was fought near Tamsui on the 2nd November, and a number of minor places captured with great loss to the Chinese. The war was prosecuted with continued vigour throughout the winter. Kelung, which had been re-captured by the Chinese, fell a second time in January 1885. Two junks were successfully torpedoed on the 15th February, and Chin Hae, as well as the Pescadore Islands, captured in March. At length, weary of the war, the Chinese consented to listen to the reasoning of Sir Robert Hart, and on the 6th April the preliminaries of peace were signed at Peking.

The treaty embodying the terms arranged at Peking was signed on the 9th June following. It provides for

the recognition by China of all the treaties concluded between France and Annam, the delimitation of the frontier between China and Tonkin, permission for trade to pass the frontier by a choice of routes, passing either through Mengtse in Yunnan or Lungchau in Kwangsi. Customs stations were to be established at these places by China, and France was to have the right of stationing consuls at each. Despite the completeness of these concessions, and the fact that the Chinese troops had been withdrawn early in May, the war was not destined to come to an end. A series of massacres involving the death of 700 Christians and the destruction of 30 villages followed in 1886, and, in November of that year, the French renewed the contest against the natives, who were supported by the Chinese on the frontier, and led by a noted pirate named Duc, who murdered, with great barbarity, all the Christians he captured.

The acquisitions made by the process recorded above were confirmed by the binding together of the countries Annam, Tonkin, and Cambodia in a Customs Union, and the appointment of a French resident in 1887, while during the years 1893 to 1896 a further gain of territory extending over more than 100,000 square miles on the east side of the Mekawng was attained after a war with Siam.

The French sphere in Indo-China to-day comprises the protectorates of Annam and Cambodia and the provinces of Tonkin and Cochin China, with an area and a population as follows :—

	Sq. miles.	Population.
Annam (protectorate 1884), .	106,250	5,000,000
Cambodia (protectorate 1863), .	40,000	2,000,000
Cochin China (annexed 1861), .	24,000	2,000,000
Tonkin (annexed 1884), . .	145,000	9,000,000

Of these territories Tonkin is the only one which shows any promise of becoming a valuable colony, and this is held solely by force of arms. The number of troops stationed in Annam and Tonkin is 23,000, and the relations existing between the French and the natives are exceedingly strained. The great object aimed at by France in the acquisition of these extensive territories was to obtain an entrance into South China from a base which should be exclusively her own. By the achievement of this object it was believed that not only would a very large and valuable trade be developed, but that by the imposition of heavy customs dues other nations would be prevented from sharing in the profits. There is little doubt but that another point kept in view by the French exploiters of Indo-China was the shutting out of Great Britain from access to the fertile province of Yunnan, which our neighbours regarded as their own particular preserve.

Unfortunately for the achievement of these ambitions the conformation of the country adjoining the Franco-Chinese frontier is such as to render extremely difficult the opening of a direct trade route. The great river, which was at first regarded as the natural highway into China, proved to be unnavigable. The expedition which started from Saigon to explore the

Mekawng under Captain Dondart de Lagrée, had to abandon its boats, and only succeeded in making the trip into Yunnan by using native canoes, and taking at intervals to the banks. The expedition, after suffering considerable hardships, returned to Cambodia after an interval of two years, with a report unfavourable to the route proposed. And so the French colonists had to seek another means of satisfying their ambition, and the necessity of doing this was doubtless the main cause of the hasty annexation of Tonkin. It was indeed presumed that the Sankoi would prove more amenable than its bigger neighbour, and, as soon as Hanoi had been occupied by French troops, an attempt was made to reach Yunnan by its aid. But the Red River proved no better than the Mekawng, and, abandoning all hope of a waterway into China, the military authorities turned their attention to the making of a railway, which should supply the deficiencies of nature. But the energetic action of the French authorities was delayed by the necessity of coming to terms with Great Britain on the subject of the proposed railway, which it was pointed out would infringe certain British rights over the Shan States.

Great Britain had in 1894 restored the state of Kiang Hung to China, on the condition that it should not be ceded to any other power. The subsequent rectification of the Franco-Chinese frontier made the territories of the two countries coterminous from the Mekawng River to Laokai on the Tonkin frontier; and, as this arrangement included the placing of Kiang

Hung under French rule, a protest from the chief commissioner of Burma called for prompt attention. Eventually, the matter was settled by an agreement, dated 15th January 1896, by which the Mekawng was made the boundary between the two nations from Siam to China. From the settlement of the boundary question to the present time, France has devoted her energies to the exploitation of the Chinese frontier, and the formation of trade routes, and in the latter respect their efforts have met with considerable success.

The routes across the Yunnan frontier through Mengtse and Lungchau were opened in 1889, and their effect on the transit trade of South China became apparent early in the following year, when steam-boats began to ply on the Sankoi River, between Haiphong and Hanoi, and Laokai, the nearest frontier town to Mengtse across the frontier, while a railway was constructed uniting Hanoi with Langson on the road to Lungchau. A railway is also under construction between Hanoi and Haiphong, and a line of steamers has been established, which runs between Haiphong and Hong-kong. The effect of these measures has been the shifting of the bulk of the Yunnan trade, which formerly found its way to the Si Kiang, and so down to Canton and Hong-kong, to the Tonkin route, and this achievement is entirely due to the energy of the French, who have all along enforced the concessions as to transit passes made by the Chinese Government. It is entirely owing to this course, aided largely by the construction of railways and the encouragement of steam-boat communication, that the French have

secured a large amount of trade, and the result should serve as a useful object lesson to our own Government, which has consistently neglected to take similar precautions. At the present time British goods are actually going from Hong-kong by the Sankoi route, *viâ* Mengtse, to the important city of Yung Chang, within a few days' road of the British frontier at Bhamo, from which they could have been despatched to their destination in one-third of the time, and without paying toll to the French colony in Tonkin. The only satisfaction to be gained by us from the success of French activity lies in the fact that the bulk of the goods which pass up the Sankoi are of English origin, and many of them are conveyed in British vessels.

It has been stated by a writer who has had exceptional opportunities for studying the question,* that the annexation of Tonkin was undertaken by France, not on account of its intrinsic value but in order to gain a base for the future absorption of Southern China, and there can be little doubt but that she would long ago have effected her purpose but for the attitude of the natives, who proved themselves men of very different mettle to the inhabitants of the northern and central districts. The conquest of Tonkin cost France nearly 40,000 men and a very large addition to her debt, and it is very improbable that she will attempt further operations until either a national rising or the overthrow of the Manchu dynasty affords an easy opportunity.

The achievements of France in Indo-China have

* Mr Holt S. Hallet, *Nineteenth Century*, January 1898.

been marked by an expenditure of life and treasure out of all proportion to the results attained, and her hold on the territories over which she is supposed to rule is maintained only by the employment of a very large military and naval force. Indeed, in Annam and Tonkin, even more than in Algeria and Madagascar, French colonial policy has proved a failure. The causes of this are various. In the first place, the people are devoid of adaptability, and seek to develop territories in the tropics on exactly the same lines as have proved successful at home. The second weak point in Gallic methods is to be found in the national love of parade and personal aggrandisement. The number of officials in France is well known to be out of all proportion to the population, but in Indo-China the *fonctionnaires* are both more numerous and less competent than in Europe, and the mania for red tape, with the attendant cost of administration, is also greater. The colonial expeditions of France have always been motived by a desire to distract attention from affairs at home. Now, in addition to being popular as an excuse for a hunt for glory, the conquest of far-off territory affords an opportunity for getting rid of troublesome individuals who possess some influence, but are gratified by the conferring of an official post, with the attendant right to wear a gorgeous uniform. Tonkin is to-day simply swarming with officials, the bulk of whom lead an indolent existence, in which mutual jealousy and mistrust, with occasional forays against the natives, afford frequent opportunities for relaxation.

On this point all those who have had opportunities for judging the situation agree. Thus Captain C. B. Norman says :—

> Préfets and sous-préfets, maires and their adjoints, précepteurs of contributions directes and indirectes, bureaux of enregistrement, bureaux of octroi, bureaux of police, bureaux of douanes, juges de paix, juges of the tribunal civil, and of the tribunal correctionnel, greffiers and huissiers, and all the hundred and one tyrants who tend to make life insupportable to the man who longs for freedom, all flourish with tropical profusion, and with more than their native vigour in the colonies of France. When the emigrant leaves Havre or Marseilles, he flatters himself that he is now leaving a land where one-half of the population is taxed, in order that the other half may wear a uniform ; but when he lands in his new home, he finds the proportion of officials to private Frenchmen as ten to one, and he then realises that his only hope of escaping vexatious and inquisitorial supervision is to accept some subordinate post himself, don the kepi, and abandon all hope of a free life.*

The best proof of the accuracy of this statement is afforded by the fact that a considerable proportion of the emigrants who reach Indo-China from France, migrate either to Hong-kong or to Singapore, where they join the ranks of the British traders and prosper. The expenditure entailed by the indulgence of the vanity of the French authorities is simply enormous, and, with rare exceptions, unproductive. In addition to providing residences for the scores of officials quartered everywhere within the territory under French protection, consuls have been appointed and consulates provided at well-nigh every town of any importance in the neighbouring Lao states and kingdom of Siam. Mr H. Warrington Smyth has

* *Tonkin, or France in the Far East.*

recently given an account of his visit to the French representative at Korat.

> The most striking innovation at Korat was the French consulate. There were no French subjects, and there was no French trade, but a very charming consulate was being built at a cost of 30,000 francs, to replace the present building occupied by the consul and his interpreter, where we were most hospitably entertained. Two tricolours floated in the compound, and M. Rochet informed us that the flag would soon float over the whole of the country round.*

Despite the failure of the French to make their colonies remunerative, or even self-supporting, they keep one aim always steadily in view. The great panacea for every difficulty which stays the progress of Indo-China is the acquisition of mere territory, and if this can be gained in such a direction as to injure British interests on the Chinese border, so much the better. It has long been hinted by responsible officials in Annam and Tonkin, that the occupation of the whole of Siam, up to the Burmese frontier, is only a matter of time; and, pending the arrival of the right moment, the French busy themselves with the establishment of consular posts in Siamese territory and the opening up of further communications with Yunnan, where she hopes to succeed in establishing herself on such a basis as to handicap materially the relations between Great Britain and China along the frontier formed by the Salween. Only last year, the authorities at Hué sent a mission, consisting of experts, to explore the province of Hunan, which the French have long since expressed their intention of

* *Five Years in Siam.*

opening up to foreign trade, which, of course, means to the trade of Tonkin.

A most important endorsement of the rumours which have reached this country of late, in this connection, is given by Mr C. A. Moreing in a current review.

For some time past, the French have cast longing eyes on Hunan, and I am convinced that they are anxious to enlarge their sphere of influence in China, by including it amongst what they already consider as theirs. A glance at the map will show you that with Kwang-tung, Kwangsi, Hunan, Kweichau, and Sechuan in their hands, a French barrier will be erected between British India and the Yang-tse Valley. That they are very active I am aware. French commissions of exploration are operating in those very provinces; and when I was in Hunan, three weeks ago, a French commission crossed into the province from Kwang-tung. They travelled slowly and, I learned, were roughly surveying a contemplated line of railway into Hunan. The commission was composed of three civil members and one military officer, and I may mention that the latter *always* wore his uniform. They were protected by an escort of over 100 Chinese soldiers, and they likewise were accompanied by Annamites. They worked down the Siang Valley and proceeded to Hankow, where they arrived shortly after me, and I learned that they intended to explore the province of Kiangsi.*

There can be no two opinions as to the future route between South-Western China and the sea. When once the railway has opened up the direct route between India and China, all produce destined for British markets, will naturally find its way across the frontier of Yunnan into Burma, and thence to Rangoon or Calcutta, but the road to Canton, Hong-kong, and the sea-board of Indo-China will be not by the Yang-tse

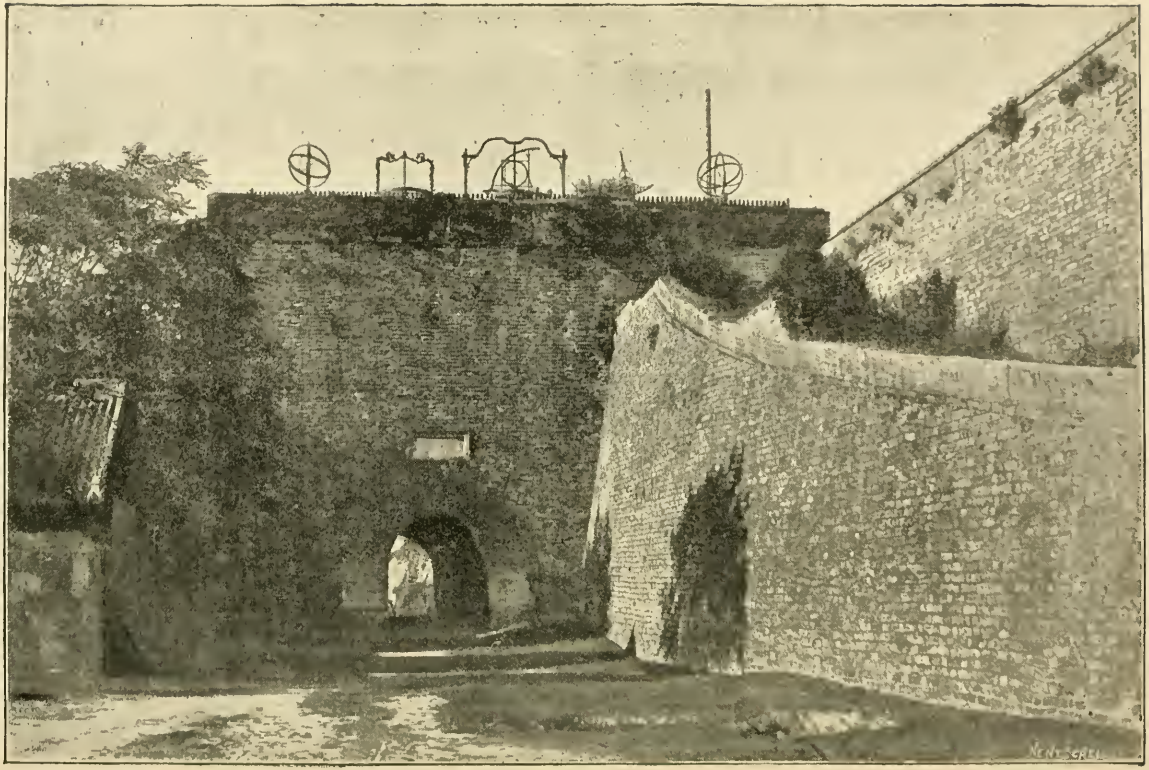
* *Nineteenth Century*, September 1898.

or the Si Kiang, but by the Sankoi, through Tonkin, and no artifice will succeed in ordering things otherwise. The French are in possession of a route to Western China, which is only excelled by our own, and the effect of this is already seen in the diversion of traffic from the Canton River. But while she has attained control of a route which has many advantages, France loses more than by her tenacity she gains. As colonies, her possessions in Indo-China are lamentable failures. To quote Mr A. R. Colquhoun, who enjoys exceptional opportunities for fitting himself to speak with authority :

> They have not the power of adapting themselves to new peoples and to new countries. They will not go abroad to the Far East as colonists, or even as traders, nor is this specially to be wondered at, seeing that France has no overflow of population such as other countries have. . . . Tonkin has a rich delta, but is for the most part jungle covered with hill country, and is unhealthy and uninhabitable for French settlers or traders. France administers the Government with a great yearly deficit, merely for the benefit of—excepting a multitude of *fonctionnaires*—natives and strangers, more especially the traders of Southern China.
>
> Recruited at random, the French colonial officials are seldom either competent or trustworthy. Perhaps one out of ten may be reliable and efficient. . . . The French codes are applied without change in every quarter of the world, and in the modern Eastern possessions, exactly as they were in the old colonies of France. . . . Such colonies are not a source of strength, but of weakness to the *mère patrie*. Instead of having so many outlying bulwarks, each contributing its quota of industry and wealth, these "uncolonised colonies," these languishing and artificially maintained possessions, are merely so many hostages to fortune.*

* *China in Transformation*.

And still France goes on squandering lives and money without return, and stands firm in her resolution to follow the advice given by Prince Henri d'Orleans, after his famous tour through Tonkin and Siam, to "be Asiatic, for there lies the future!"



GATEWAY AT PEKING.

CHAPTER IX.

THE GERMAN RECORD.

GERMAN influence in China is a comparatively recent growth. A mission sent by the King of Prussia to Peking in 1861 succeeded in obtaining a commercial treaty on lines similar to those signed at Tientsin by the representatives of Great Britain and France, and a second treaty was concluded between Germany and China in 1880. Up to this date the intercourse between the two countries was slight, and the amount of trade insignificant. The first intimation of an intended Far Eastern policy on the part of Germany was given in the course of a speech by the foreign secretary in the *Reichstag* towards the close of 1896, when it was announced that an understanding had been arrived at with Russia respecting the future action of Germany in China. This speech attracted a considerable amount of attention at the time, but nothing followed, and it had been practically forgotten, when the long sought opportunity arose for carrying out the desires of the colonial party.

Early in November 1897, two German missionaries were attacked by robbers and killed while travelling in the Kuyehien district of the province of Shantung.

Immediately on hearing the news, instructions were sent to the German squadron in the China Sea, which sailed for the province implicated and anchored in Kiaochau Bay.

On Sunday, the 14th instant, at 8 A.M., a landing party was sent ashore to take possession of the heights surrounding the bay. At the same time the order was given to the "Cormorant's" landing party, she being farthest inside the bay and commanding the passes to the interior, to take the powder magazine. Towards 9 o'clock these points having been secured, the Flag-Lieutenant was sent to the Chinese General with an ultimatum that within three hours he must clear out of the camp. The soldiers were permitted within the same time to depart with their weapons and possessions. The two ships "Kaiser" and "Prinzess Wilhelm" were so anchored outside of the port that they commanded the forts, the order having been given to fire on the same on a certain given signal.

After delivery to him of the ultimatum the General withdrew, as resistance, especially as his ammunition had been seized, would have been futile; the same was done by the soldiers, saving their goods and chattels as far as possible. Towards 2 P.M., the German flag was hoisted on the east fort; the Admiral made a speech to the crews, these saluted and gave three cheers for the Kaiser. The inhabitants behaved quite peaceably; in reality they were satisfied to be free of the native soldiers. The native soldiers withdrew behind the hills and erected a camp at a distance of about five miles. The forts were then all occupied and measures taken to guard the country against plundering.*

The following demands were next drawn up and laid before the Tsungli Yamen by Baron Von Heyking, the German ambassador at Peking:—

(1) The building of an Imperial tablet to the memory of the missionaries who were murdered.

* *North China Daily News*, 29th November 1897.

(2) The indemnification of the families of the murdered men.

(3) The governor of Shantung to be degraded permanently.

(4) The Chinese Government to defray the cost of the German occupation of Kiaochau.

(5) German engineers to have preference in the building of any railway which China may construct in the province of Shantung, and also in the working of any mine which may exist along the track of such railway.

On receiving these demands the Tsungli Yamen replied declining to commence negotiations until Kiaochau was evacuated, to which Baron Von Heyking answered, after having communicated with Berlin, that "the uselessness of putting any faith in the promises of the Chinese Government having been proved by experience, the evacuation of Kiaochau would not take place until the Chinese had assented to the demands made. This announcement was made on the 25th November, and on the 30th, while still waiting for the reply of the Tsungli Yamen, the Germans posted about the town proclamations in the Chinese language, notifying that a defined area round the bay would be governed under the law of Germany. This course greatly irritated the Tartar General in Shantung, who is reported to have made use of strong anti-foreign language, which at once brought a further demand from the German minister for the instant dismissal of the general, accompanied by a threat that he would leave Peking if his demand were not complied with.

The Tsungli Yamen did as requested the same day, and on the 3rd January 1898 the whole question was solved by the leasing of Kiaochau to Germany for a period of 50 years. The following is a translation of the official announcement published in Berlin two days later :—

According to a telegram which has arrived to-day from Peking, an agreement has been come to between the German and Chinese Governments respecting the cession of Kiaochau, which is to the following general effect :—

The German Government is enabled by the agreement to fulfil its legitimate desire to possess, like other nations, a point of support for its trade and navigation in Chinese waters. The cession is in the form of a long lease, and the German Government is empowered to erect all necessary buildings and establishments inside the specified limits of the district ceded, and to take the measures required for its defence.

The district ceded comprises the whole inner basin of the Bay of Kiaochau, as far as high-water mark; also the large promontories which lie north and south of the entrance of the bay as far as their natural boundaries, to be drawn at heights suited to that purpose, as well as the islands which lie inside the bay and at its mouth. The district ceded has a total area of several square miles (1 *German equals* 4 *English miles*), which is surrounded by a large zone of which the bay is the centre, within which no measure or order can be carried out without the concurrence of Germany; and a special provision is made reserving to Germany the right to control the water-course without hindrance on the part of China.

In order to avoid conflicts which might affect the good relations between the two Empires, the Chinese Government has surrendered to the German Government all the rights of sovereignty which she possessed in the ceded territory for the duration of the lease.

The duration and terms of the lease are not given in the telegram announcing the conclusion of the agreement, which telegram is very short.

Should Kiaochau Bay prove from any cause not to be suited to

the purpose which the Imperial German Government has in view, the Chinese Government shall, after arriving at an understanding to that effect with the German Government, cede to the latter another point on the coast better suited to the end desired. In that case, the Chinese Government will take over the buildings, establishments, etc., erected by the German Government in the Kiaochau district, and will reimburse the said Government for the expense incurred in erecting them.*

The publication of this official notification attracted considerable attention in Germany, which was not lessened by the declarations made in the *Reichstag* a month later that it was the intention of the government to open Kiaochau to the trade of the world.

On the 13th March the German Governor of Kiaochau notified that Germany claimed the whole of the province of Shantung as being within her sphere of influence. On the 27th April, an Imperial Order was issued by the German Emperor, nominating the district of Kiaochau an Imperial Protectorate, and in September it was announced that as soon as the number of the European settlers warranted such a measure, a system of self-government would be introduced, and the town of Kiaochau declared a free port.

The Bay of Kiaochau forms one of the finest harbours on the China coast. Less than two miles in width at its entrance, it extends over an area of about 150 square miles, and affords at all times a perfectly safe anchorage for ships. The harbour is entirely surrounded by hills from 400 to 600 feet high, and is thus admirably suited to the requirements of a naval base. It is believed that when the forts now in course

* *Reichsanzeiger*, 5th January 1898.

of erection are completed, the harbour will be practically impregnable by sea, while the approach from the land will be defended by a series of fortifications across the head of the bay.

On a spur to the east of the entrance to the bay is the town of Ching-tao, which is at present the residence of the German Governor. A railway is about to be constructed round the eastern side of the bay between Chingtao and Kiaochau, a distance of some twenty miles, and this will later on be extended towards Tsinanfu to form the northern trunk-line of Shantung.

The great feature of the district round Kiaochau is the valuable mineral and metalliferous deposits which abound. It is, indeed, generally supposed that it was the wealth of minerals, coal especially, in Shantung which led the Germans to fix on that part of China for a settlement. The coal-fields of the province have been surveyed by Baron Richthofen, the greatest authority on the subject, and he states that the coal of Shantung is of good quality, black and hard, burning with a clear flame, and making excellent coke; it has great heating power. But the beds lie low, and, in consequence, the pits are soon flooded, as the natives do not understand how to keep the water down.

In the winter months Kiaochau is the natural outlet for the trade of North China; in the summer months Tientsin is the most convenient port of access. If, however, Kiaochau is made the terminus of a line to Peking and North China, the advantage to the province of Shantung will be immense. The chief

reason why it is as yet so little developed is the difficulty of access.

The principal point is that the Power which possesses Kiaochau controls the coal-supply in northern Chinese waters. It is highly improbable that Shantung will ever form a German Colony in the proper sense of the word. The territory is already overcrowded, and immigrants from Shantung are the main element in the new population of Manchuria. Europeans cannot compete with Chinese labour. It is out of the question that Germany should acquire a large territory in Shantung, and thereby become involved in all sorts of complications. Her object should be to obtain a *point d'appui* for her trade, so as to insure herself a share in the industrial development of China.

The following remarks, written by a German expert on the advantages of Kiaochau as a naval base,* are of considerable interest, and seem to show the importance of the German acquisition in China :—

No portion of the Chinese Empire, with the exception of some of the provinces bordering on Russia, can be so easily acquired by an enemy as the Shantung Peninsula. With Kiaochau undefended, nothing would be easier than to land an army there and take up a defensive position straight across the peninsula to the Pe-chi-li Gulf, in rear of the waterway referred to above, and thus sever it from the interior. Its recapture would be most difficult, whilst the enemy could make use of it to prepare for a further advance, as was done at Chifu in 1860.

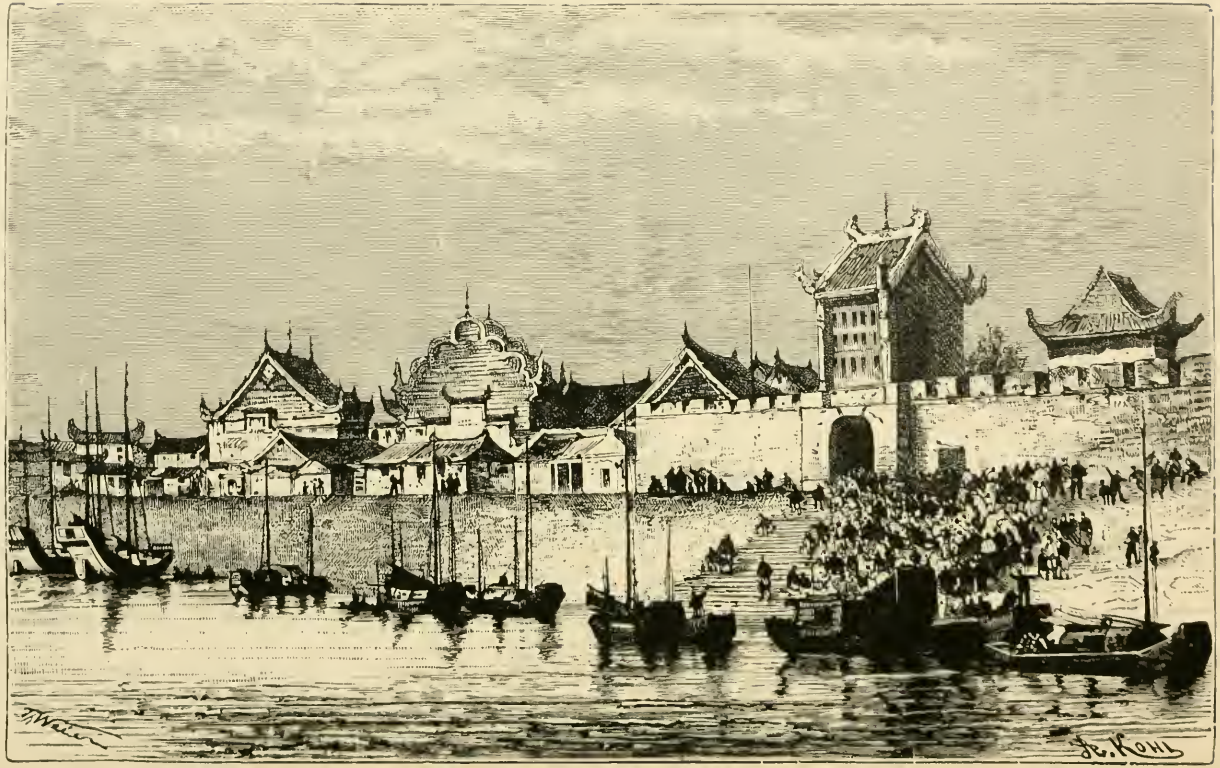
If on the other hand Kiaochau is well fortified, not only is the most exposed position of the Shantung peninsula protected, but an

* Lieut.-Colonel Rheinhold Wagner, whose memorandum on the defences and harbours of China has been translated by Captain P. Holland in *R. U.S.I. Journal*, August 1898.

enemy could be easily expelled. . . . No invasion of the country could ever be attempted without the capture of Kiaochau.

In the event of an attack by land, or a siege, the harbour in Kiaochau Bay could be easily and rapidly reinforced, owing to the fact that, unlike Port Arthur or Wei Hai Wei, it does not lie at the extreme end of a peninsula but close to the heart of the country, and troops could be easily brought up from the Yang-tse Kiang or the Pei Ho if it was found they were not required there, and that the enemy intended a blow at the main naval base, and the destruction of the fleet. Kiaochau is, of course, not so close to the Pechili Gulf as Wei Hai Wei or Port Arthur; but then, on the other hand, no hostile fleet would attempt to enter this gulf with the main Chinese squadron ready for action in their rear at Kiaochau. They would, moreover, in order to attack the Pei Ho, have to have a second fleet strong enough to hold the Chinese fleet at Kiaochau in check.

Germany may therefore be said to have acquired in Kiaochou the key to Northern China, and while holding this, will possess a controlling voice in all questions affecting the fate of Peking. But while dominant over the provinces of Shantung and Chili, her power does not reach southward; and so long as the British retain Hong-kong, with the preponderating influence at Shanghai, Canton, and Hankow, the southern seaboard and Yang-tse Valley will remain practically, if not actually, under our control, provided always that we do not permit Russia to establish herself on the Yang-tse, as she is exhibiting every intention of doing.



SCENE ON THE YANG-TSE KIANG.

CHAPTER X.

TRADE IN CHINA.

The commercial possibilities of an Empire covering more than 400,000 square miles, and comprising a population of close on 400,000,000, do not require lengthy comment. If only the country were opened up so as to render free intercourse possible between the people and the foreign traders, there can be little question but that China would speedily become one of the biggest markets in the world. But, so far from the country being opened up, the Chinese have strained their every nerve to keep it closed against the traders of the world, and it has only been under pressure of defeat, or by the exercise of the wiles of diplomacy, that the foreign trader has succeeded in obtaining a footing at all within the Empire.

Despite the interval of 250 years which has elapsed since first the traders of foreign nations opened up relations with the natives of Canton, the restrictions which were at the very outset imposed remain in force, and, in face of the many opportunities which have been afforded the Chinese of studying western ideas and appreciating the advantages of

foreign intercourse, trade is to-day restricted to the "treaty" ports, where alone the foreigner is permitted to transact business with the native. The number of treaty ports at present open is thirty, and the total of the foreign trade in 1896 was £55,600,000.

The conduct of commercial relations between European nations and China is handicapped by a variety of circumstances. The financial system of the country is eccentric and unsatisfactory. Trade is largely affected by a series of restrictions, due to the existence of a number of guilds and monopolies. Traffic is difficult, owing to lack of communications other than the waterways, and articles of trade are taxed to an excess, which unduly affects imports and very materially depresses the export trade. Lastly, owing to the difficulties of the language and the conservatism of European firms, intercourse with the natives must, as a rule, be maintained by the assistance of interpreters, who are, generally, venal and greedy, and who bleed their employers to such an extent as to seriously prejudice their interests and allow business to be carried on with only a small margin of profit. This last difficulty has increased of late years in the face of the growing competition among the nations, with the result that the vast profits at one time made by the Merchant Princes of Canton and Shanghai have disappeared, and that trade is rapidly becoming merely a matter of small percentages.

The Chinese currency is on a silver basis, but it is, like most things Celestial, subject to a series of anomalies, which render financial transactions extremely

complicated. The unit of value is an ounce of refined silver, which is spoken of as a *tael*, but there is no such coin in existence, the term being used merely as a denomination of value. For purposes of exchange the tael is made up of a certain number of copper coins known as cash, of which about 1600 go to the tael, the exact number depending on the particular kind of tael employed and the relative appreciation of copper to silver. For while the tael represents a Chinese ounce of silver, the value of the definition is considerably lessened by the fact that there are at least four different ounces known to Chinese traders. Thus, there is the treasury ounce, which may be taken as the normal weight; the commercial ounce, which is not constant but varies somewhat in different districts; the customs ounce, which is considerably heavier than the treasury standard; and the light ounce, of which one hundred are reckoned as ninety-eight. The treasury weight is only used in dealing with the Government. House rent is by custom paid in the light ounce; while mercantile transactions are carried on with the commercial ounce, of which the exact value is not always known to the trader.

The only coins minted to any considerable extent are cash, small copper coins, of which each has a hole in the centre so as to admit of its being threaded on a string, and these are usually passed from hand to hand tied up in bunches of a hundred. Taken at its face value, the cash may be said to run eleven to the halfpenny. But, owing to the fact that an appreciation of copper has of late years taken place in China, the relation of the

cash to the tael does not always follow the market value of silver.

The form in which silver passes current throughout China is the sycee, a solid chunk of refined silver, of varying purity, cast in the form of a shoe, and weighing about fifty ounces. These sycee are not issued by the Government, but by private refiners who stamp them with their names. The sycee or "shoes" are either passed whole, or, when the payment to be made is trifling, they are cut into smaller pieces and taken at the value indicated by the weight, the basis of calculation being one ounce = one tael. In large transactions the particular sort of ounce is always specified. In 1890 an imperial decree was issued legalising throughout the country the silver dollar coined at the new Canton mint, but the output has been small, and the bulk of the silver coinage in China consists of Mexican dollars, which have long been accepted in payment at the treaty ports.

Bank-notes have long been used by the Chinese, and are issued by private firms and bankers, but they have not yet obviated the necessity of carrying one's money in the form of strings of cash, which, in the case of a lengthy journey, frequently form the heaviest portion of the traveller's impedimenta. The arrangements for the transmission of money from one part of the country to another are entrusted to exchange banks, which are almost all in the hands of men of the Shansi province, who excel in this business. They have worked out among themselves a very high commercial morality by centuries of rigorous domestic

discipline. If an employé defrauds a Shansi bank, no appeal is made to the law or the magistrate; he is sent home to his native district, tried by his family elders, and treated in a very drastic manner, sometimes, it is said, buried alive. An average exchange bank would lend to business houses on personal security about 200,000 taels, on which it would receive 10 to 12 per cent. per annum. This is security given to the public that the bank can meet its drafts. A piece-goods merchant with ample resources would have to give for such an advance 7 to 12 per cent. per annum, according to the state of the money market.

A curious feature in this system of banking is referred to by Mr F. S. A. Bourne in a recent diplomatic report.*

These exchange banks do not care to receive deposits from the public, as this would damage their credit. They employ agents who are always about the business quarter inquiring into the proceedings of their customers so as to gauge their credit. When they want money they sell their bills on other places. They are often entrusted with money by the officials, sometimes Government but usually private funds, and on this they give, more or less as a favour, 5 to 6 per cent. per annum. They do not lend money on land or houses, but they lend to local banks that advance it in trade on personal security. There are no bank-notes in circulation at Chungking. When the merchants in the foreign import trade get in their debts, as on the three settling days, they buy bank drafts on Shanghai; they would send round to two or three banks with which the firm in question did business and inquire their rate. When a retail shopkeeper has gathered enough cash he buys a shoe of silver, and takes it at once to the merchant to reduce his indebtedness and save interest. Very little money is lying idle in business: but

* Foreign Office, Miscellaneous Series, No. 458, 1898.

there is some hoarding of silver among the country squire and farming class.

The most curious feature in this system of banking is that there are no advances against goods, but only on personal security. The only instance of an advance against goods I heard of was in Sechuan at Chiating Fu where an owner sometimes places insect wax in the house of a man who advances against it. But this is a clumsy transaction, only applicable to goods of fixed quality and of high value.

At the commencement of foreign intercourse with China, all the trade was done at Canton, where a certain number of traders were known as the Hong merchants, who were licensed to hold commercial relations with the foreigners under a *hoppo*, or superintendent of trade, who was responsible for the good behaviour of the foreigners. Indeed, so stringent were the regulations in these early days that the foreigners were only permitted to visit Canton on being vouched for by this official scapegoat, who was thus the means of saving the viceroy a deal of trouble. With the opening of the other ports freed by the treaty of Nanking this arrangement ceased, and the foreign traders were enabled to deal with the Chinese direct, through an interpreter who was now one of the first necessaries of a Chinese store. The demand for interpreters capable of acting as go-betweens rapidly increased and gave birth to a class of men known as compradores,—the Portuguese for purchasers. The peculiar talents of the Chinaman found an exceptionally favourable outlet in the new occupation thus provided. The compradore rapidly became indispensable to his employer, and he did not fail to recognise

this, or to recoup himself for his service by levying "squeeze" on his employer and his customer indiscriminately. The position of affairs was soon realised by the merchants, but they found themselves helpless, and though the blackmail extorted from the purchaser often prevented his paying as high prices as he would otherwise have been able to do, and the spoliation of the employer necessitated the charging of a higher price than would otherwise have been necessary, the compradore proved himself the master of the situation, and so he remains at the present time.

Like every other calling in China, the compradores have their guild or society, corresponding to our own trades' unions, which looks after the interests of its members, and frames regulations for their government. So powerful are the majority of these guilds, that it is practically impossible to counteract their influence. In the case of the compradores, the assumed right of acting as go-between is so well established that no Chinese merchant will dare to deal with a foreign firm which has discharged its compradore until another has been engaged, and there is reason to believe that it is no unusual thing for the new-comer to pay a proportion of his pickings to his predecessor. It would, indeed, be difficult to exaggerate the immense power of these guilds. An idea of the influence they possess is given by Mr E. L. B. Allen, British consul at Pakhoi, who states:—

Order is supposed to be more or less maintained among the Chinese by the local guild of "gentry," a body which in October last distinguished itself by annexing in the streets of this town a

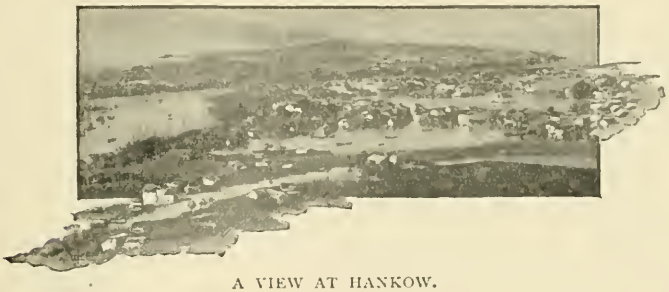
quantity of camphor sent down from a neighbouring district by a respectable native dealer, and holding it to ransom. I may mention, in illustration of Pakhoi ways, that this plundered camphor dealer presented a formal petition to this consulate, setting forth his wrongs; that I handed it on to the sub-district deputy magistrate, and that the latter replied to me in an official note acknowledging that the petition was true, but that he was powerless to help the wronged man. Native trade under such conditions can hardly be an exhilarating pursuit.*

Mr W. R. Carles, another consular official, gives some interesting particulars of the builders' and other guilds at Chinkiang on the Yang-tse :—

No interference is permitted with a customer's engaging any builder preferred by him. Touting for employment is punishable by a fine to be fixed in public meeting. No outside firm is allowed to work until it has joined the guild, and received a certificate of this, the fee for which varies from 8 to 20 dollars. Assistants or foremen who endeavour to obtain business on their own account from persons for whom their masters work are liable to a heavy fine. Masters have to pay the guild a cash per diem for every man employed by them, to form a fund to meet subscriptions for canal works, etc. A similar tax is levied on assistants to meet the cost of festivals, illuminations, etc. If trouble occurs between a builder and his employés and work is stopped, no other labour can be engaged until all outstanding accounts are settled. Breaches of this rule are punishable by fine levied in public meeting. A payment of 200 cash to the general fund is required for every house built of a certain size. The payment on smaller houses is one-half this amount. The whole power of trade in China rests in combination and monopoly. This has been weakened by foreign influence, but every attempt at developing new branches of trade leads to an attempt to return to the old principles, by seeking Government protection against competition.

* Foreign Office Reports, Annual Series, No. 1983, 1897.

These guilds not only hamper trade and restrict progress, but they also play an important part in the Local Government. The likin duties, levied on the passage of merchandise inland, is frequently farmed out by the Local Government, the method being to let the collection of the duty on a particular article of consumption to a syndicate. Such syndicates have frequently been run by compradores, greatly to the disadvantage of their employers. This operation has been several times effected in the case of likin on



A VIEW AT HANKOW.

kerosine, and a gigantic scheme to farm the taxes on cotton yarn was only prevented by the exertion of the Hong-kong authorities in 1894. The practice of letting out the likin is more frequent than would be supposed. In one case, discovered only last year, the duty on kerosine and matches in the province of Kwangsi was let to a syndicate by proclamation for twelve years, the price paid to the Government being 10,000 dollars a year and the likin being estimated to return double that sum. Of course, a good deal of the profit finds its way back into mandarin pockets

by way of bribes and presents, in return for having obtained the contract, but the syndicate always profits considerably, while the national exchequer suffers in proportion.

The effect of this manipulation on the British merchant is disastrous. To quote Mr Bourne :—

> The trader is, of course, absolutely in the dark about all this ; they cannot speak Chinese themselves, nor can any of their employés whom they can trust. When the merchant finds his business not as profitable as it was, and proposes, perhaps, to his compradore to sell English cottons in Canton, the compradore will inform him that if he does the Piece-goods Guild will boycott his firm in Hong-kong. This was actually done in the case of one of our largest importers of Lancashire cottons. The firm will now drop back into its fetters and draw such profits as the compradore allows.

The compradore system is in reality a constant drag on the increase of British trade, and its evils are recognised not only by foreigners in China but also by the educated Chinese, one of whom, the Hon. Ho Kai, a Chinaman who was educated in England and who is a member of the Legislative Council of Hong-kong as well as a barrister-at-law, has only recently spoken very plainly on the subject, and has given it as his opinion that the compradore makes at least as much profit on transactions effected by him as does his employer. Mr Ho Kai advises British merchants to engage the services of trusted employés who can speak Chinese. He avers that, as things are now, the compradore tends to become the merchant, and the head of the house his agent, since the trader who wishes to do business must accept the compradore's terms or do nothing. And another gentleman quali-

fied to speak with authority, having long resided in the interior, gave it as his opinion that for every dollar made by a leading British firm in Hong-kong their compradore makes two.

One of the factors which has had great influence on the growth of foreign trade in China is the placing of the Maritime Customs under the control of an Englishman. The Imperial Maritime Customs of China stands out in bold relief against every other Chinese institution, in being managed with scrupulous honesty by a staff of officials who are alike conscientious and unbribable, and there is no question but that the efficient supervision under which the duties are levied, is very largely responsible for the steady growth of trade which has taken place during recent years.

The Chinese customs department has grown from small beginnings, which have gradually led to the development of one of the most remarkable organisations in the country. To quote Mr R. S. Gundry, who has enjoyed exceptional opportunities for studying the subject:—

> The foreign customs establishment in China is the product of circumstances. The Chinese customs system, lax in itself, had proved unable to deal with foreign trade. It will be remembered that, prior to 1842, there had been no regular commercial intercourse except at Canton. Certain methods had been devised then of meeting the exceptional circumstances; but the Chinese customs at other ports had practically to deal only with the native coasting trade; and the Chinese system of administration admitted great laxity in the collection of dues. The underlying conception seems to have been that commodities should pay duties amounting roughly

to 10 per cent. before entering into consumption ; about 3 per cent. being usually charged at the port of shipment, and 7 per cent. at the port of entry. But there seems to have been no system of accountability. Recognising no doubt the impossibility of exacting precision, the Imperial Government had compounded at some antecedent period, for a fixed tribute from each port or customs district ; and the Provincial Governments seem to have followed the example.*

Thus was each Provincial Government supposed to collect its own customs, but the system did not work, and peculation, delay, and vexation to the trader resulted. The incapacity of the native officials in dealing with the collection of customs sanctioned by the treaty of Nanking prompted the British consuls at the treaty ports to come to the assistance of the Government, and these duly collected the customs authorised and handed the amounts received to the superintendents appointed by Peking.

This system proved satisfactory enough until the development of trade with France and the United States, when difficulties cropped up, and it was found that, to the prejudice of the British traders, foreign goods were being imported without the payment of the full duty. On this being reported to the British Government, Lord Palmerston sent instructions to Sir George Bonham, to stay the collection of customs by the British consuls, and instruct the Chinese that they must look after their own revenue.†

It was at this juncture that Woo, the Totai of

* *China, Past and Present.*

† Correspondence respecting consular interference for the prevention of smuggling in China presented to Parliament, 1857.

Shanghai, sought a conference on the 29th June 1854 with the British, American, and French consuls, on the subject of the collection of customs dues, and it was, after some discussion, decided that the Totai should appoint some foreigners of known character and position to act as inspectors of customs, with a staff of foreigners and Chinese, chosen by them, to carry out the work of collection. Accordingly, the three consuls were nominated inspectors, the first British representative on the board being Mr Thomas Wade, then Her Majesty's vice-consul at Shanghai. Mr Wade resigned his post on his appointment to Peking in 1855, and was succeeded by Mr H. N. Lay, who followed him as vice-consul. The French and United States consuls were also removed about this time, and, as neither country nominated gentlemen to succeed them on the customs board, Mr Lay remained sole inspector. In 1861, he came to England on leave, his work being entrusted to Mr Robert Hart, and, on the final retirement of Mr Lay two years later, Mr Hart became inspector-general, and he has continued to perform the onerous duties attached to his post up to the present time, excepting only the brief interval during which he held the more important appointment of British minister at Peking.

The work of the Chinese Maritime Customs extends to every port on river or sea within the Chinese Empire. The work was till the present year carried on by the inspector-general, with the assistance of 30 commissioners, 12 deputy-commissioners, and 132 assistants, the outdoor service comprising a large

number of examiners, surveyors, etc., etc. The total strength of the staff was 800 foreigners and nearly 4000 Chinese, but, owing to the supervision of the likin duties, placed under the charge of Sir Robert Hart as security for the loan made by Great Britain and Germany to China in February last, the staff has been considerably augmented, and the labour of its chiefs greatly increased.

The work accomplished by the inspectors of customs came at the very outset as a revelation to the Peking authorities. It was the first proof they had ever had of the possibility of a government servant acting honestly, and the fact that the accounts were scrupulously kept, the receipts accurately paid over, and all offers of bribery rejected, was speedily recognised with the greatest amazement. Indeed, there is no doubt that other branches of the Chinese revenue would have been promptly placed under foreign control, but for the fact that it was realised that to take the opportunities of peculation away from the mandarin would probably result in something like civil war. But while the native taxes and duties are still in the hands of the mandarin, other work of great utility has been placed in charge of the customs department: notably the lighting of the coasts of China and, quite recently, the organisation of the Imperial Chinese Post Office, still in process of incubation.

Great as the possibilities of trade with China unquestionably are, the achievement is small in proportion to the opportunities existing. This fact is due to

the unparalleled conceit of the officials, who let no opportunity pass of stimulating the exclusiveness of the masses. The time is past when this could be done openly and with impunity, and the repressive action of the mandarin is to-day restricted to the secret encouragement of intolerance, and the placing of as many difficulties as possible in the way of progress. But the measures thus adopted have not resulted in the banishment of the foreigners whose presence is so bitterly resented, while they have largely contributed to the retrogression of Chinese trade and the hindering of Chinese development.

When first the British came to exchange their wares with the natives of Canton the principal articles of import were opium and cotton goods, while the chief exports were tea and silk. To-day the imports are increased by the addition of well-nigh every article produced in foreign countries, while the exports have come to include a host of heterogeneous objects which find their way to every part of the world. But, in several of the most important and remunerative of the articles exported, there has been a gradual decrease due to the extraordinary methods pursued by the Chinese, who prefer to sacrifice trade and lose money rather than adapt themselves to the requirements of their customers and move with the times. This is especially noticeable in the case of tea, which through neglect has been allowed to decline to less than one-half of the quantity formerly produced. The decrease in what was at one time the staple Chinese export is noteworthy, and it forms one of the best proofs of the

utter hopelessness of the official classes. The following table shows at a glance the decrease which during nine years has taken place in the export of black tea. The figures are those supplied by Sir Claude Macdonald in the last published return on trade in China.*

Year.	Great Britain.	Australia and New Zealand.	United States.
	Piculs.†	Piculs.†	Piculs.†
1887, ...	729,022	169,905	175,142
1892, ...	313,978	122,691	209,603
1893, ...	322,235	91,891	202,797
1894, ...	259,269	80,583	258,884
1895, ...	203,785	84,773	163,569
1896, ...	171,113	46,910	115,053

These remarkable figures are accounted for by several distinct circumstances. Experts, such as Mr Cass of Amoy, attribute the ruin of the tea trade to excessive taxation, which renders the cultivation of the plant unremunerative, and its export at a price enabling it to compete with the product of Ceylon impossible. In his report on the tea trade of Amoy, Mr Cass goes so far as to state that the promised introduction of improved methods of cultivation will prove futile, as the day when it was possible to resuscitate the expiring trade is past. "The only possible remedy is the total abolition of the likin, and the reduction of the export duties to a parity with

* Foreign Office Reports, Annual Series, No. 1984, 1897.

† A picul is the Chinese hundredweight, 133 lbs.

that existent in other countries." In conclusion Mr Cass says :—

> We may, perhaps, be treated to some jubilation from Fuchow and Hankow when it is definitely decided that a tea rolling machine has been allowed to be erected at some inland point without any extraordinary levy of extra duty and squeezes on the part of the Chinese officials; but the opinion of the very highest experts is that all the machinery in the world will not now save the China tea trade, unless a complete amelioration of taxation accompanies its introduction.*

The same opinion is expressed by every person who is qualified to judge. Sir Nicholas Hannen echoes Mr Cass, and their evidence is substantiated by every British consular return which emanates from a tea district. While the export to Great Britain and America is, however, decreasing, that to the continent of Europe and Russia is increasing, for the reason that the Ceylon teas, which are, owing to their more careful culture and preparation, forcing the Chinese out of the British market, have not yet penetrated into other countries.

The moral taught by the decline of the tea trade applies to most branches of the foreign trade with China. The officials, from the viceroy to the lowest mandarin, with the rarest exceptions, care only for feathering their own nests, and benefiting their families and retainers. The encouragement of trade, the development of the country, and the benefit of the people, are never considered, and every means which offers an enlargement of opportunity for peculation is seized on with avidity.

* Report on Tea. Foreign Office Reports, No. 1863, 1897.

A company, known as the Fu Kiang Steamer Company, started in July 1896 with the object of developing the traffic on the great Poyang Lake, situated near Kiukiang, on the Yang-tse. The main object in view of the company was the towing of junks between the various towns in the district, which, by effecting a great saving of time, would considerably add to their earning power. On hearing of this, the officials at the various likin stations determined to counteract the efforts of the company, and proceeded to detain the steamers at the various ports of call for such a time as to bring their journey up to the average length. It would be easy to place many such insane proceedings on record, but the efforts of the authorities are more usually directed to the discovery of an illegal means of adding to their revenue. In this regard I cite Mr Byron Brenan.

Considering the thickly populated region which Canton should supply in addition to its own 2,000,000, one cannot but be struck by the absurdly small amounts of foreign imports. The superior endurance of native fabrics may have something to do with the restricted import of our textiles; but the real general explanation is, undoubtedly, to be found in the heavy taxation specially imposed upon goods imported from abroad. The intention of the framers of our treaties was that imports in British ships should pay only 5 per cent. *ad valorem* so long as they were consumed in the port—that is the city and suburbs—of Canton, and that an additional half-duty should clear them of all duties on their way to any place in the interior. The actual state of things is far different. Relying on the theory that China as an independent power is free to tax her own subjects as she pleases, and assuming that the Concession is the area of exemption from likin, the Provincial Government has narrowed the treaty right by confining its operation to British-im-

ported goods while they are in the hands of British subjects. Once they are sold to Chinese, a tax, euphemistically styled terminal likin or octroi, is levied specially on such goods, and it is gravely argued that, as this tax is levied on all foreign goods, no matter whether they pass through the foreign or the native custom-house, there is no differential treatment. In this way the treaty stipulations are nullified. For, while 5 per cent. is undoubtedly a light tariff, 5 per cent. plus an extra percentage limited only by the risk of destroying a lucrative revenue means unrestricted taxation. And the practical outcome is that the duty authorised by treaty represents simply the share of the Central Government in the taxation of imports.*

And lest the evidence already given should leave any doubt in the reader's mind as to the extent to which Chinese trade is being killed by mandarin greed, I will cite the remarks made by our consul at Fuchow on the methods by which prohibitive imposts are laid on enterprise.

While the local exports have decreased, the system of inland taxation which is the curse of China has become more widely developed and more firmly established. The revenue received by the Government is trifling in comparison with the amount collected. No proper supervision of the accounts at these tax stations is attempted. At some, no accounts are kept, and the cash received are merely thrown into a basket until a sufficiency for the day is collected, the later receipts of the day not even being put temporarily in the basket. The officers in charge of the stations leave their duties to underlings who follow their masters' example. The likin tax is capable of almost indefinite extension, as the charges are at first infinitesimal in amount, and so long as the Peking Government makes little or no provision for supplying the deficiencies in provincial exchequers caused by the diversion of their revenue to the Central Government through the foreign customs, the provinces must rely largely upon likin receipts not only for their administration, but, also, to provide for the interest on foreign loans. All new developments of

* Foreign Office Diplomatic Reports, No. 2156, 1898.

trade are watched with a view to possibilities of further taxation, and those officials who discover fresh sites at which likin stations can advantageously be opened are sure to be recommended for promotion. Until the likin system is absolutely abolished, to make room for a more enlightened system of taxation, there seems little hope of this province regaining its former prosperity.*

The discouragement accorded to the export trade by this system of extortion has already produced marked results, and will, if not stayed, tend ere long to cripple seriously the trade of the Empire. It is scarcely necessary to point out that it is the exports which pay for the imports, and that, if once the former decline beyond a certain point, the amount of foreign goods sent into the country will have to be lessened. A deficiency of exports means a decrease of purchasing power, and this brings with it a corresponding diminution of foreign trade. As Great Britain holds something like 70 per cent. of the total foreign trade of China in her hands, it follows that she is the nation most deeply interested in this question; and this suggests the necessity of our exerting a more marked influence on the commercial exploitation of the country than we have hitherto exercised.

The total trade of China amounted in 1896 to £55,600,000, of which £39,271,000 was carried on with Great Britain. The relative amount of trade done with the different nations is shown in the following table, the figures in which are taken from the Foreign Office return:—

* Foreign Office Annual Series, No. 2072, 1898.

Greater Britain,	£39,271,000
Japan,	4,795,000
Europe (excluding Russia),	4,585,000
United States,	3,842,000
Russia (with Siberia),	2,856,500
Portugal (Macao),	1,034,500

The remaining countries, including Spain, Cochin China, Turkey, Persia, Algiers, etc., represent under a million sterling altogether.

In order to emphasise the remarks I have made respecting the disproportion between imports and exports in China I append a further table in which the two are separately indicated. The values are expressed in Haikwan (*i.e.*, customs) taels, the present value of this unit being 3s. 3d. The figures are for the year 1895.

	Imports to China. H. Taels.	Exports from China. H. Taels.
United Kingdom,	33,960,000	10,571,000
Hong-kong,	88,191,000	54,775,000
India,	16,944,000	2,764,000
Other British Countries,	4,506,000	3,605,000
Japan,	17,195,000	14,822,000
Continent of Europe,	9,344,000	21,172,000*
United States,	5,093,000	15,383,000*
Russia,	110,000	15,603,000*

The total value of the tea exported from China to foreign countries in 1896 was, in round numbers, rather over five million sterling, and of silk seven million

* These, the only cases which show an excess of exports over imports, are due to the trade in tea, which, owing to the causes dealt with above, must decrease. It will be noted that the excess shown in these three instances added together makes a total of only 36,000,000, whereas the deficiency of exports, as compared with imports, from the British Empire alone amounts to 70,000,000 taels.

sterling, while the principal classes of imports ranked in the following order :—

Cotton goods and yarn, ...	£13,207,000
Woollens, ...	1,000,000
Metals, ...	1,626,000
Miscellaneous manufactured goods, . .	13,258,000

Thus the total imports into China give an average of less than eighteen pence a head of the population, while the total trade does not allow more than half-a-crown for every Celestial.

Coming to the question of method, it must be admitted that the Japanese are most successful in the cultivation of trade with the Chinese. This fact is not difficult to understand, seeing that the inhabitants of Niphon have a racial likeness to the Celestials, and naturally understand their ways. The British are pre-eminent in the bulk of their commerce, and, owing to their enterprise and the immense capital they control, are likely to maintain their lead, their most formidable opponents in the near future being most probably the Germans. The French are alike poor traders and indifferent colonists, and, despite the activity which has for some time past been displayed by them in South China, their efforts appear intended rather to keep Great Britain out of certain districts, than to effect the capture of the trade within them for French manufacturers. The total of the trade carried on with China by Russia is small in proportion to the immense extent, resources, and geographical position of the latter country. But with Russia as with France, the procreation of commerce is an excuse

rather than a reason for inquisitive exploration, which is really intended to lead to a further acquisition of territory for political and military ends. The question then arises: how is the commercial intercourse between foreign countries and China to be encouraged, so as to extend the markets already existing and increase the custom of the people? Before attempting to answer this question it will be as well to glance briefly at the idiosyncrasies which distinguish the Chinese trader with whom business has to be done.

The Chinese merchant is shrewd, sagacious, and enterprising, and, as a general rule, trustworthy. It is extremely rare for a native trader to fail to keep his engagements. There are three fixed settling days in the year, but if, by arrangement, an account is allowed to stand over two of these, it will most infallibly be settled on New Year's Day, which is the great festival set apart for balancing up and paying debts. But in his reasoning the Chinese trader exhibits characteristics of his own. In pricing his goods the European merchant examines each article minutely, and, having gauged its value, marks its selling limit. The Celestial does not trouble so much about his wares. He devotes all his attention to the reckoning up of his customer, and, having formed his estimate of what he will pay, fixes his price accordingly. A typical illustration of this method is related by Mr Holcombe* in the case of a Chinese hotelkeeper who agreed to board a visitor for a dollar a day. But finding, after three months, that he could not get his

* *The Real Chinaman.*

bills settled, he voluntarily reduced his charge one-half, in order that he might not lose so much by him!

The love of bargaining among the Chinese has been referred to in the chapter on the People. No transaction can be arranged without it, and, as a general rule, in small transactions each party to the deal succeeds in apparently besting the other, the buyer paying a lower price than that demanded, while the seller gives short weight or measure, thus balancing the account. The idea that cheating is dishonest never enters a Chinaman's head. False or adjustable scales are on sale in every big town. A purchaser will go marketing with a steelyard so adjusted as to be capable of weighing three different pounds. The seller is similarly equipped, and the final settlement of the business in hand may take hours. The same methods are adopted in the more important wholesale dealings of the import firms.

Notwithstanding the two hundred years which have elapsed since the commencement of British trade with China, our merchants are to-day still on the fringe of the country, being permitted to deal with the natives only at certain specially appointed places, and restricted from sending goods into the interior except in certain specially authorised directions. The result of the absurd regulations which keep Western nations waiting on the doorstep of China has been the restriction of trade and the severe handicapping of the foreigner.

For a long series of years all the treaty ports were on the sea-board or the estuary of some big river. The first waterway opened up in the interior was the

Pei Ho, on which the port of Tientsin was opened to trade in 1860. The Yang-tse followed, being opened as far up as Hankow in 1862, and to Ichang in 1876; Chungking, the furthest limit yet reached, was conceded as a treaty port in 1893. The only other waterway open to the foreigner for the purpose of trade is the Si Kiang, on which the city of Wuchau has been quite recently declared a treaty port. Despite the number of the places now open to trade in China, the bulk of it remains in the hands of the Chinese, who themselves act as agents for the foreign merchants. By a process of natural selection, the treaty ports have become ranged in categories graduated according to their relative commercial value. The great emporium for the trade of all China is of course Hongkong, which is not a Chinese but a British settlement. The most important of the markets on Chinese soil is Shanghai, where there are more than eighty British firms all doing a prosperous trade. Shanghai is the commercial base for mid China and the lower reaches of the Yang-tse. Here are sample-rooms and stores, where the native merchant seeks his purchases, and whence goods of every kind are despatched up river or along the coast. Next to Shanghai in commercial importance comes Hankow, far up the Yang-tse, situated on the border of two provinces, and commanding a more extensive system of waterways than any other city within the Empire. It is indeed possible to reach any province of China by water from Hankow, and this fact has long since caused the place to assert itself as the commercial capital of the interior. There

are to-day twelve British firms established in Hankow. Tientsin has become for North China just what Shanghai is for the central coast line. It is the great centre of commerce for Peking and the Chili Shansi and Shantung provinces. It boasts nine British firms, while the neighbouring ports of Newchang and Chifu accommodate five more. Next in order to these come the southern ports, in which the tea trade is carried on. Fuchow and Amoy each contain six British merchants' establishments, while Swatow has to be content with two. And lastly Canton, the great southern mart of China, the scene of so many contests between the natives and the hated barbarians, is now the home of half-a-dozen British firms. It will probably cause some surprise to the reader who meets with these figures for the first time that the number of British firms in China is so small; but various causes, to be discussed later on, have tended to restrict that display of energy and that risking of capital which one would suppose would tend to add continuously to the number of British traders in the Celestial Empire. The total number of foreign firms established in China in 1897 was 595, and the number of European residents 9363. Of these the numbers contributed by each nation are as follows :—

Nationality.	Firms.	Residents.
British, . . .	374	4929
German, . . .	104	950
American, . .	32	1564
French, . . .	29	698
Russian, . . .	12	116
Japanese, . . .	44	1106

It is interesting to note that the British and the Germans are the only nations whose establishments show an increase over those of the previous year. In every other instance there has been a decrease.

The great question which arises in connection with commercial intercourse with China is, what can be done to promote trade? The answer is difficult. There are so many factors which combine to defeat any attempt at commercial development that the problem appears to be practically insolvable. The great poverty of the bulk of the population, the perversity and ignorance of the Central Government, the selfish corruptness and thievishness of the mandarin, and the crass ignorance of the literati, all tend to defeat any attempt at introducing civilising influences, or extending the modicum of intercourse which has been already achieved. The lack of authority of the Tsungli Yamen over the provincial governors renders difficult, if not impossible, effective negotiations between foreign ministers and the Chinese Government. If an attempt be made to deal direct with a local viceroy, he shelters himself behind the fact that he is responsible to Peking, and all negotiations must be conducted there. When the almost eternal delays, with the attendant squabbling necessary to achieve anything with the board of foreign affairs, have been lived through and a nominal concession has been obtained, it is discovered that the provincial governors refuse to obey the behests of their superiors, who do not make the slightest attempt to insist on their orders being carried out.

The result of the constant filching of the revenues by the mandarin has been to impoverish the exchequer to an incredible degree; and the gradual growth of the national debt has, by necessitating the sequestration of the customs and likin dues, increased the ravages of the officials, and further decreased the revenue received at Peking. With characteristic shortsightedness, the native financiers seek to meet this state of things not by insistence on official honesty, or the appointment of accountants and surveyors to hold the mandarin in check; but by seeking the consent of the powers to double the rate of impost levied on imports. They fail to understand that such a course must infallibly kill foreign trade and further deplete the national exchequer. The expedient is on a par with that attempted by the board of revenue many years ago, when an edict was issued decreeing that each "cash" should in future be regarded as representing the value of two.

The heavy taxation imposed on inland trade tends to paralyse the exchange of produce between the various provinces. Each district is thereby forced to be self-supporting; whereas, if only the power of the mandarin to erect likin barriers wherever they choose were curtailed, a large and remunerative exchange of commodities would arise which would at once tend to enrich the country and to increase the revenue.

To quote Mr Brenan:—

> As long as provincial governments retain the power of opening new tax stations, and placing them in the hands of corrupt officials,

our goods will never be safe. Whatever promises the Chinese Government may now make, there is no reason for believing that it has the will or the power to abide by its new engagements more faithfully than by the old. Any talk about refunding illegal imposts is vain; before restitution can be demanded there must be proof, and proof will never be forthcoming, for no Chinese will venture to bear witness against his own officials. It is the uncertainty as well as the burden of taxation that acts in restriction of trade. Chinese merchants complain that they are unable to base any estimate on the published tariffs of the likin stations, for these are enforced in a very loose way. Two merchants in the same line of business may fare very differently, and the less favoured may find that his venture results in a loss.*

But patent as is the grievance of excessive taxation, it is by no means the only factor responsible for the relatively small volume of foreign trade in China. Quite as material in its way is the utter lack of enterprise exhibited by this people of stagnant ideas. They refuse to advance to meet the foreigner, or to seek trade with him. The merchant stranger must seek them out himself, and tempt them with his wares. Neither will they, like progressive nations, develop wants. The merchant must create the demand he wishes to supply. Energy and push must be provided entirely by the foreigner, who has himself to find all the enterprise, knowing that what he does not do will not be done at all.

I am not writing for the commercial reader, and do not propose going more deeply into this subject or proposing remedies. But I am impelled to draw attention to one means by which the interests of the country could be very largely served without calling

* Trade at the treaty ports of China, 1897.

into existence any new machinery, or embarking on any fresh expenditure. I refer to the missionaries who are to-day resident in nearly every part of China. I have, on a previous occasion, drawn attention to the immense services which might be rendered to our commercial interests, if only the members of the various missions in China would co-operate with our consuls in the exploitation of the country, and the introduction of commercial as well as of purely theological ideas to the Chinese intelligence. I am glad to note that this idea has met with approval in more than one quarter. In a recent foreign office return, I find the following expression of opinion from Her Majesty's consul at Canton :—

> If we could enlist the co-operation of these men, they might, once rightly directed, render much service to trade, without in any way detracting from their usefulness as missionaries, or endangering the success of their spiritual work. To the sceptical Chinese, the interest manifested by a missionary in business affairs would go far towards dispelling the suspicions which now attach to the presence in their midst of men whose motives they are unable to appreciate, and therefore condemn as unholy. They are constantly coming in contact with Chinese traders, and men of consideration in their own localities, and they must often obtain useful information which now is wasted, but which might be turned to good purpose if it could be communicated in the right quarter.*

The greatest factor in the restriction of trade intercourse with China is the Celestial's want of knowledge of the foreigner as he really is. The native only knows the "outer barbarian," the "foreign devil," whom he has been educated to shun with contempt; and the

* China, No. 1979, 1897.

missionaries who unquestionably succeed in attaining a friendly footing among the Chinese of the interior could do much to destroy these delusions. On this subject I quote an apt passage from Mr Bourne :—

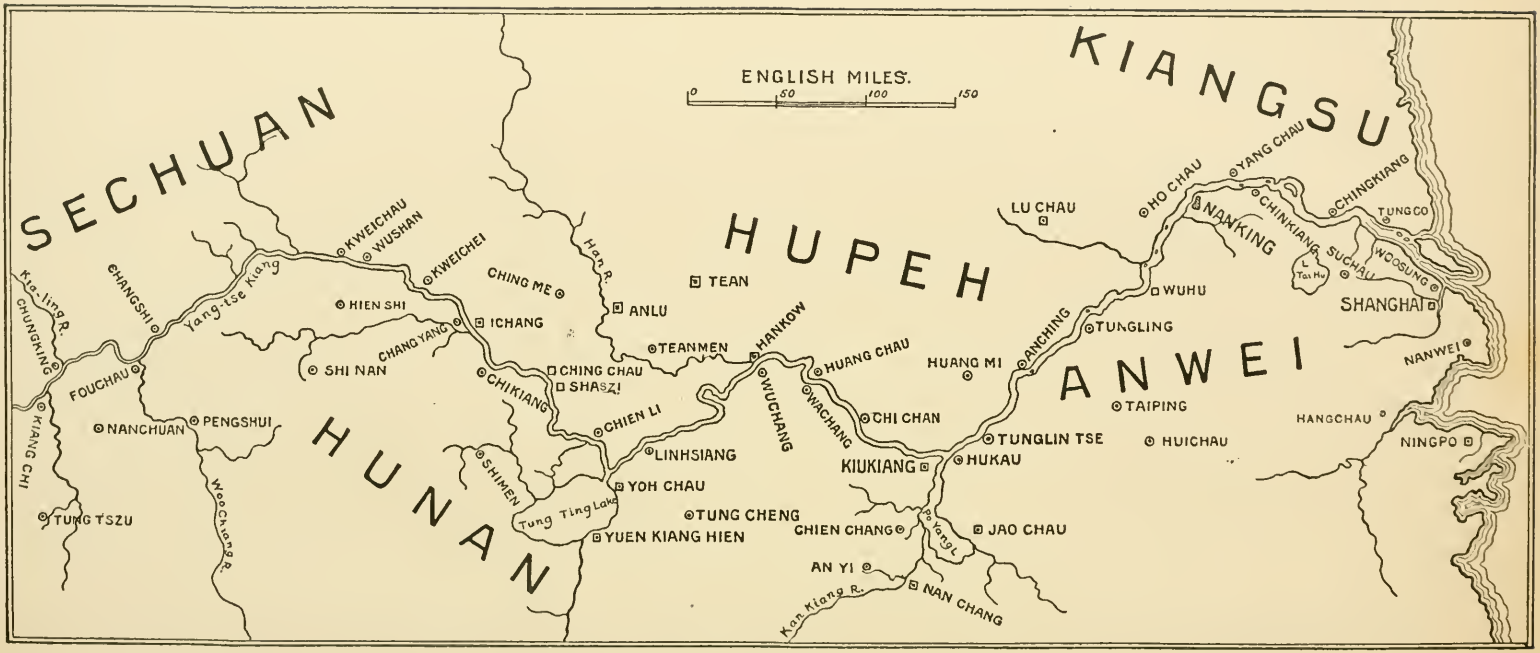
In order to improve China's demand for our imports, her exports must be increased in value, and this can best be done by Englishmen living in settlements, like that at Shanghai, at suitable places in the interior, who, while managing steam shipping and developing the export trade, could at the same time distribute imports and be ready to engage in mining and engineering enterprises as the opportunity offered. Rich men will not live in the out-ports, and poor men cannot make a living independently: therefore, the work must be done by rich firms or corporations able to wait and train in the Chinese spoken language and mercantile customs youths selected in England for their business capacity. In ten years such a system would give us a hold over the foreign trade of China that the present methods can never do.

It may occur to an Englishman unacquainted with the East, that such a programme is much too far reaching, and that the Chinese can be trusted shortly to enter upon the path of progress, when our existing agencies in Shanghai and Hong-kong will be quite sufficient links of foreign trade. This is the view which has brought our trade into its present condition of dead-lock; it is based on a much too sanguine estimate of Chinese institutions and character. It is not that the Chinese will not progress in the modern sense, but that they cannot. They have not the institutions, the laws, or the character on which to base the elaborate structure of modern commerce. The analogy from Japanese progress is delusive; the Japanese had till recently a feudal system; they have an aristocracy, and a healthy social hierarchy based on a sound subordination; they are an organised body, and their leaders have made them a nation: the Chinese, although, individually, in physique and intellect, more than a match for the Japanese, have none of these things, nor the least desire to attain them.

Therefore it is better to base our hope of future development of foreign trade in China on Englishmen living in the country and

pursuing their own interests; when they have achieved success the Chinese will certainly try to follow in their wake.

The suggestions contained in the above quotation are in every respect admirable. The principle laid down is self-evident. China cannot progress, because the people do not wish to, and the officials would not let them if they did. And so the country remains always the same,—ignorant and benighted, its shortcomings concealed behind a veil of arrogant conceit, and thus it successfully resists the attempts of enlightened nations to open up relations which can only tend to the benefit of all the parties concerned.



THE NAVIGABLE PORTION OF THE YANG-TSE KIANG.

CHAPTER XI.

THE BRITISH SPHERE.

The spheres of British influence in China extend to well-nigh every portion of the Empire. For the purposes of the present chapter, they may be conveniently classed geographically in three zones—Central, North, and South. I have already dwelt on the supremacy of British trade at the treaty ports, and now purpose dealing with the political, rather than with the purely commercial, aspects of our relations with the Chinese.

The methods by which our representatives have succeeded in securing our trade interests at the treaty ports are of two kinds, and vary somewhat in detail. The first necessity in the opening of a new port to foreign intercourse is the obtaining of a piece of land on which the new-comers may erect dwelling-houses and stores, and where, later on, a quay or bund may be constructed, so as to render the berthing of ships and the handling of cargoes possible. These may be attained by means of a settlement or by a concession, and each method has its advantages. A concession is a piece of ground leased by the Chinese to the British Government, and sublet to British merchants, while a settlement is an area within which the British are permitted

to lease land direct from the native proprietors. The form most usually employed in the case of a settlement is a perpetual lease, and in either case the land becomes, for the time being, and with certain limitations, British soil, and is policed and controlled by the representatives of the British Government, who generally delegate these duties to a council of resident merchants. Experts differ as to the relative advantages of these two methods, but the reasoning put forward by Mr F. S. A. Bourne, who has had exceptional opportunities for judging the results of both, seems to me unanswerable.

"The area of a concession is necessarily small; Her Majesty's Government stipulate, in leasing, that land is not to be sublet to Chinese; and where this rule is carried out, as, for instance, in Canton, the concession tends to become stagnant, being shut off from the wave of growing prosperity around it and hampered by a cordon of likin surveillance. The plan of a settlement seems preferable in every respect except that of providing an area for the exclusive residence of Westerns; and this want might be met in the case of a settlement by the provision of a special site for foreign residence. The point is that a sufficient space should be provided for manufacture, the preparation of such exports as silk, hides, wool, feathers, etc., for warehouses and for the residence of the body of Chinese engaged in foreign trade. Unless such areas are provided, British merchants will never settle up country in China; and, I submit, that without them the country can never be opened up to our trade." *

* The Trade of Central and Southern China.

Thus at every port there is either a British concession, as at Chinkiang, or a British settlement, as at Shanghai. The conditions of trade and influence are the same at Newchang in Manchuria as at Pakhoi in Kwangtung, and the only difference is one of degree, which depends on the rivalry of foreign traders, or on the prestige enjoyed by the respective foreign powers.

In North China we have commercial strongholds at Tientsin, Chifu, and Newchang. Our trade at each of these is considerable, and Chifu is additionally important on account of its salubrious position, which has caused it to be regarded as the sanatorium of China. Large sums of money have been expended on the development of this place, which is resorted to by consular officials and British merchants from all parts of the country.

The status of the British at Peking is somewhat peculiar. The capital, so long closed against foreigners, is now the residence of representatives of all the powers, each provided with a considerable establishment. Foreign trade, as understood by us, is non-existent, although there can be little question that a remunerative traffic might be developed with the Mongolian and Tibetan caravans, which annually wend their way to the city. The political influence of Great Britain at Peking was, until quite recently, supreme, but the rivalry of the powers in the struggle for concessions, added to an extraordinary display of weakness by the British Government, as compared with the bold front exhibited by the representatives of Russia, France, and Germany, have very seriously

lessened the respect with which our embassy was formerly regarded, and it is generally admitted that, until we exert ourselves to show that we retain our old vigour, our prestige will remain under a cloud.

The most noteworthy feature in the British sphere in North China is the recent acquisition of Wei Hai Wei. Few places have been discussed with greater acrimony, or given rise to more widely divergent opinions. It may, therefore, be useful if I give a somewhat fuller account of the new naval base than has yet appeared.

The territory leased to Great Britain on the northern side of the Shantung promontory comprises the bay of Wei Hai Wei, the walled city of the same name, with the island of Liukung and the smaller islands adjacent, together with a strip of land 10 miles wide, along the entire coast line of the bay. Wei Hai Wei bay is about 18 miles in circumference. It is easy of access, and capable of affording anchorage to a considerable number of vessels. The depth of water a mile from the shore is 4 fathoms, and large battleships can anchor close to the island, which is 2 miles long and 500 feet high, and serves in great measure to protect the bay from the north. The country round is mountainous, the hills averaging some 1800 feet. The island is surrounded with forts, there being eleven in all, each built of stone and constructed on the most modern principles. The work was performed under the supervision of a German officer, who also planned the defences of Port Arthur. The prospects of the place,

from a strategic point of view, are, however, of the poorest. The island of Liukung, when its forts are repaired, and the guns, which were removed by the Japanese, replaced, will command the approaches to the harbour, and probably prove capable of keeping a foreign fleet at bay, but it and the whole of the bay is dominated by the heights behind the town. So long as the mainland is not attacked, Wei Hai Wei is safe enough, but if an enemy should once carry the heights, the place is lost. And to fortify the heights and to man them would require a very large force and the expenditure of an immense sum of money. In addition to these points, the harbour is exposed to the north-east, and likely to afford but an unsatisfactory shelter against the storms which prevail at certain times of the year. Taken as a whole, while the Government were justified in taking possession of Wei Hai Wei, in order to prevent Russia or Germany from doing so, the place is unsuitable as a naval base, and quite unsatisfactory as a fortified position. To compare it with Port Arthur is equivalent to contrasting Yarmouth Roads with Gibraltar. Wei Hai Wei (which signifies depot of terrific warships) is 40 miles from Chifu, and 100 from Port Arthur.

In respect of the number of British bases, South China compares favourably with the North. Pakhoi, Wuchau, Canton, Swatow, Amoy, Fuchow, Wenchau, and Ningpo, each has its concession where British trade and British influence are developed, though in more than one instance the latter exhibits but a slow growth. And in the centre of this group of outposts is Hong-

kong, not a Chinese treaty port, but a British colony ruled over by the Queen's representative; in fact, one of the most remarkable and most prosperous of all British possessions.

Hong-kong Island was first occupied by the British in January 1839, and ceded by the Chinese in 1841. It was decreed a free port the following year, and the settlement which was formed on the north side of the island was named Victoria. Hong-kong is 9 miles long and from 2 to 6 miles wide. Its total area is but 29 square miles, and the road which encircles the whole island is 22 miles in length. The harbour of Victoria, which is one of the finest and safest in the world, lies between the north side of the capital and the Chinese coast. Twenty years after the occupation of Hong-kong, the peninsula of Kauloon, opposite the city, was ceded by the Treaty of Tientsin, and the two together have since then formed the most prosperous of the British possessions in the East. Hong-kong has been fortified, and is a military station of the first class. It contains six forts, placed round the harbour, but the south side of the island is practically unprotected, and could easily be seized by an enemy, who would then be in a position to attack the town in the rear. On the 2nd of May last, a strip of land covering some 200 square miles on the coast immediately opposite Hong-kong, together with the neighbouring islands, became leased to Great Britain. The importance of this accession of territory is mainly one of strategic interest. Along the fringe of the territory leased is a range of hills of considerable altitude,

which might at any time have been used for the purpose of bombarding the settlement below. The placing of this district under British control obviates this danger, besides affording increased facilities for the extension of the colony.

There are, however, corresponding disadvantages in this latest addition to British territory. The land is barren, and could not, with advantage, be cultivated, and the population, both on the mainland and the large island of Lantao, are turbulent and very difficult to control. The city of Kauloon, which is expressly left under Chinese control, is noted as being the haunt of the worst smugglers and the biggest thieves in China, and these are so reckless of life, and so impatient of interference, that they turn out and fight pitched battles with the mandarin on the least provocation. Among this rabble are many pirates, who, even to-day, ply their trade in the creeks and inlets with which the coast is serrated, with practical immunity, though they appear to have learned the wisdom of leaving foreign vessels alone. People who know China are all agreed that it was a fatal error to permit the city of Kauloon to remain under Chinese supervision. The dangerous characters who haunt the place are a constant menace to British interests, and, apart from the facility with which they could act as spies, and afford information to our opponents, may at any time turn on the English around them, and do a large amount of mischief with the greatest ease.

The population of Hong-kong, exclusive of the territory recently acquired, is 240,000, of whom 8600

are whites, and the value of the transit trade was in 1896 twenty-five million pounds. Unfortunately, the climate of the island is not at all times healthy. Epidemics occur at intervals, and the plague has, in recent years, claimed many victims. From these drawbacks, however, the prosperity of the colony does not appear to suffer, and the place remains a notable example of what can be achieved by British energy, supported by British capital.

Coming to Central China, we reach that much-discussed territory, which has of late been so freely descanted on in the daily press and elsewhere. I have already referred to the great river of China, the Yang-tse, with its immense volume and its vast possibilities, but I have dealt with its features from their geographical standpoint alone. It is now necessary that I should place before the reader an account, not of the river, but of the region it serves, the region spoken of as the Valley of the Yang-tse Kiang, and suggested as the exclusive sphere of influence of Great Britain in China.

Before going further into the question of the capabilities of the territory in question, it will be as well if I draw attention to a point which appears to have escaped public attention. I refer to the fact that to speak of the Yang-tse Valley as the sphere of British influence is to assume a position for which there is not the slightest justification. The cession of the Valley has never been demanded by this country, and it has most certainly not been volunteered by the Chinese. The whole question arose during the negotiations

between the Chinese government and our own for the recent Chinese loan of £16,000,000 sterling. China, unable to raise the money she required in order to pay the final instalment of the war indemnity to Japan, sought the assistance of Great Britain. The overtures thus made were favourably received, and, in return for the guarantee sought, certain privileges in China were asked for this country, together with certain guarantees. Among these undertakings, all of which were originally suggested by Sir Claude MacDonald, and approved by Lord Salisbury, was a guarantee against the alienation of the Yang-tse Valley to any other power, and this was duly accorded on the 21st January last. No suggestion was made that the Valley should be made over to England. All that was pledged was, that it should not be conceded to any foreign power, and the claim of this country to exclusive facilities in this region is therefore unsupported by any justification of fact. And yet it is a matter of almost daily event to meet with references to the Yang-tse Valley as the exclusive British sphere in China, and this error is doubtless responsible for much of the nonsense which has lately appeared in print.

British influence in the Yang-tse region is exercised from Shanghai, which is not on the Yang-tse at all, but 12 miles from its estuary, on a relatively unimportant effluent. At the junction of the two is the outport of Woosung, and further up the tributary is the great emporium, which has been raised on the outskirts of a comparatively insignificant native city. To-day

Shanghai boasts a population of close on half a million. The foreign population amounts to 5000, of whom nearly 2000 are European residents of the British Settlement. The annual trade of Shanghai, according to the last report issued, amounts to £37,000,000 sterling.

Next to Shanghai, and in some respects of quite as much importance, is Hankow, the commercial capital of China, situated 600 miles from the sea, which boasts, with its attendant cities of Wuchang and Hanyang, a population of more than 1,000,000 souls. The foreign trade of Hankow amounts to some £13,000,000 annually, 80 per cent. of which is in British hands, the bulk of the remainder being Russian. Hankow, besides being the great commercial centre of China, is the capital of the Yang-tse Valley, in which British trade, and till quite recently British influence, has been paramount. Let us see of what this much-vaunted Valley consists.

The basin of the Yang-tse Kiang is estimated to cover 750,000 square miles—approximately fifteen times the size of England,—and comprises the greater portion of seven Chinese provinces. In importance this remarkable river ranks first, and in point of size third, among the watercourses of the world, and it constitutes one of the chief elements in the prosperity of the Celestial Empire. Its sources are still unexplored, and most of its tributaries are closed to the foreigner; but it is known to rise among the mountains of Tibet on the eastern side of the range whence the Brahmapootra takes its course towards the west. From the

heights of Tibet the stream flows for more than 1000 miles before it is strengthened by the Yalung Kiang in Yunnan, whence it flows with renewed energy over a tortuous course of nearly 3000 miles to the sea. In different parts of its system the Yang-tse goes by varying names. It is known in its upper reaches as Kui Ho (golden river), Kui-shi Kiang (golden sand river), and Po Yang (great river), and it is only after passing Hankow that it is spoken of as the Yang-tse, the great girdle of China.

From the time when British influence first began to assert itself in the Far East, this great thoroughfare attracted the attention of the foreigner as the highway down which the most valuable native produce found its way to the outer world; and the reports of the daring explorers who ventured up its waters into the interior directed the attention of the British Government to the immense possibilities of the unknown regions which it drains. The opening of Shanghai and Ningpo in the vicinity of the Yang-tse estuary, did much to educate British merchants as to the value of the river trade, and the freeing of its course to foreign enterprise by the Tientsin Treaty of 1858 would undoubtedly have given a very great stimulus to British commerce, had its provisions not been stultified by the inertness of Chinese diplomatists, who invented endless excuses for withholding the promised facilities, and successfully maintained the blockade of the river. It was not until 1888 that the first British steamer found its way up stream, but its lead has been closely followed, and to-day quite a fleet of merchant

vessels ply between Shanghai, Hankow, and Ichang, the latter place being 950 miles from the sea.

Our knowledge of the Yang-tse Valley is still but vague. Such details as we possess are due to the energy of travellers, who have, at the risk of their lives, ventured, often alone and unattended, into the wildest parts of the Inland provinces, and it is to such as Gros-

HOUSE-BOAT ON YANG-TSE KIANG.

venor and Baker, who explored Yunnan in 1876, Macarthy and Captain Gill, who followed three years later, and Colquhoun, who undertook extensive journeys in 1881, that our knowledge of the richest districts is due, while the exploration of the river banks has been achieved by enthusiasts such as A. J. Little, S. W. Williams, and G. E. Morrison, all of whom have

brought us tales of fertile valleys and mineral wealth undreamed of previously.

The Valley of the Yang-tse is undoubtedly one of the richest in the world. The only difference to be found in the accounts of individual travellers is as to which particular province excels in natural advantages. From Sechuan, on the borders of Tibet, to Kiangsu, on the Yellow Sea, each teems with natural wealth, and the resources of these fertile regions, so far from being exhausted, have not even been developed. The seven provinces comprised in the Valley of the Yang-tse may be summarised as follows :—

Province.	Area.	Population.	Capital.
Sechuan ...	185,000 sq. miles	... 75,000,000	Ching-tu
Yunnan ...	122,000 ,,	... 4,000,000	Yunnan
Hupeh ...	71,000 ,,	... 20,000,000	Wuchang
Hunan ...	65,000 ,,	... 16,000,000	Changsha
Anwei ...	48,000 ,,	... 15,000,000	Ngan-king
Kiangsi ...	72,000 ,,	... 15,000,000	Nanchang
Kiangsu ...	44,000 ,,	... 20,000,000	Nanking

Of these provinces, Sechuan and Hunan are admittedly the most wealthy, both on account of their great fertility and of their immense mineral deposits, for the most part unworked. Sechuan, the biggest province in China, consists, mainly, of mountain ranges interspersed with long, deep, fertile valleys, which produce opium, silk, sugar, and tobacco of fine quality and increasing quantity, while, of late years, various drugs valuable in medicine have been cultivated with success. This province is also the principal source from which we derive our supply of the purest white wax, the pro-

duct of an insect indigenous to the district. Despite the fact that the chief commercial city, Chungking, has been a treaty port since 1889, the province remains almost entirely unknown, and its trade is practically restricted to the natives. In face of this, however, the exports average over £5,000,000 in value, while the imports of cotton and woollen goods, alone, are estimated at £3,000,000 annually.

Yunnan, the most southerly of the Yang-tse provinces, is also extremely mountainous, but produces vast quantities of sugar, rice, and tobacco, and one-third of the plains on its eastern side is said to be given over to the cultivation of the poppy.

Hunan and Hupeh, divided by the Yang-tse, resemble one another in fertility and productiveness, and both alike are notable for the extensiveness of their water communications. The trade between the lower river and the cities of Hunan is the most important yet developed in Central China, and the great lake of Tung-ting, over 2000 square miles in extent, though not yet thoroughly surveyed, is reported to be navigable by steamers of considerable size. On the borders of these twin provinces are most of the important commercial centres of the Yang-tse. In Hupeh are Ichang, Ching-chau, Shaszi, and Hankow, while Hunan boasts Yohchaufu, and Changshafu, the latter known as the head centre of merchandise coming from the south. The greatest wealth of Hunan is said to consist of its mineral deposits, notably coal, which exists close to the surface and covers an extent of territory reaching over several hundred square miles. The Chinese claim

that the Hunan coalfields are more extensive than those of Pechili. Up to the present, the seams have, however, only been scratched, as the result of native enterprise. Where the coal region ends in this highly favoured province, the tea district begins, and the gardens of Hunan are famous throughout the central provinces.

Hunan possesses a strong claim to special attention apart from its mineral and agricultural wealth. I refer to the ethnographic features of the province, which are of peculiar interest, owing to the people being a race in marked contrast to those found in other parts of China. The men of Hunan are believed to be the sole remaining specimens of the original Chinese type. They possess a finer physique, exhibit more intelligence, and, when judiciously handled, are more amenable to the influences of Western civilisation than are those of any other province. And they exhibit a personal pride in the purity of their lineage sufficiently strong to cause them to regard with contempt the typical Celestial, with his Manchu, Mongolian, or Tartar descent. The commercial capacity of the native of Hunan is distinctly higher than that of his neighbours, and this has doubtless largely contributed to the prosperity of Yochau and Shaszi, which promise to rival Hankow and Wuhu as places of transhipment.

Crossing the river into the province of Hupeh, we find the beginnings of the future commercial centre of the Yang-tse Valley. Chingchau, Shaszi, and Ichang are the most important markets in this region, and to

them come traders from well-nigh every portion of the Empire. For, except as regards Chili and the unexplored regions watered by the Hoang Ho, the Yang-tse affords the only available highway between the far interior of the Chinese Empire and the sea; and Hupeh, offering the most central ports of shipment, is resorted to alike by the Mahommedan fur dealers of Kansu, the vendors of low-breed horses from the steppes, and the owners of mules from Shensi, while it is also the habitual resort of silk merchants from Sechuan, tea planters from Hunan, and drug merchants from the distant Kweichau mountains.

Kiangsi, which borders Hupeh and Hunan on the east, boasts, like its neighbour, a lake of considerable extent, round which cluster several important cities. It is less mountainous than Hunan, but, like that province, it is rich in mineral deposits, and is believed to contain much gold. It is famous for its porcelain manufacture, an art not yet entirely lost, which is shared by the neighbouring district of Anwei, which also produces the finest green tea now grown.

Kiangsu, the maritime province through which the Yang-tse finds its way into the sea, is remarkable from the fact that it probably owes its existence to the river. It is the one province in mid China which is almost entirely level, and its soil is nearly all composed of alluvial deposit, which has, during past ages, been washed down by the mighty stream. This soil is extremely fertile and produces as many as three crops in the year, its cultivation being given over to the production of silk, cotton, and rice. It was from

the prosperity of this province that the early explorers obtained their first inkling of the wealth and resources of the Celestial Empire.

The mouth of the Yang-tse, which discharges its waters into the Eastern sea about midway in the southern portion of the Kiangsu sea-board, at a distance of 1900 miles in a direct line from its source, is 70 miles wide from north to south, and the delta covers an area of 60 miles in extent. The estuary is divided by an island of considerable size, and the channels are broken by a number of banks and bars, which render the navigation somewhat difficult.

The commercial activity of Kiangsu is due to the existence of that most important port, Shanghai, with its suburb of Woosung and the lesser treaty port of Chinkiang. The city of Shanghai is the biggest trade centre under Chinese rule, and the amount of merchandise which passes through it is nowhere equalled in the Far East. Owing to a combination of circumstances, due mainly to the intolerant conservatism of the Chinese, the bulk of the foreign trade of the treaty ports of the interior is carried on through native merchants, who act as the go-betweens of importer and consumer, and thus it happens that the bulk of the foreign trade of the Chinese is transacted at Shanghai, where goods are examined and purchased by native agents, who subsequently convey them up river, either in junks or foreign craft, to be disposed of in the interior.

The interest attaching to the Yang-tse Kiang is by

no means restricted to the magnificence of its main stream. Its numerous tributaries are all of proportionate extent, and the Min Kiang, Kia-ling, Ou Kiang, Yuen Kiang, Han Kiang, and Tien Kiang have each a course of more than 1000 miles. It is calculated that the Yang-tse and its tributaries wash the walls of over one hundred cities of the first class, and the total population of the drainage area is estimated at more than 100,000,000. The navigation of the parent stream varies considerably in different parts of its course. As far as Hankow, 600 miles from the sea, the river is navigable by sea-going vessels of considerable size; but above Hankow the water is in places shallow, and a safe passage cannot be relied on for steamers drawing more than 7 feet of water. The head of the steam navigation, as at present recognised, is at Ichang, 966 miles from the sea. The remaining 400 miles to Chungking is navigable only by native junks of small size, specially constructed to stem the formidable rapids in the many gorges to be found above Ichang. The first occurs some 3 miles above the latter town, at which place the stream is more than $\frac{1}{2}$ mile in width. At a sudden bend, the cliffs which border the banks close in, and narrow the river-bed to less than 250 yards, the gorge being dominated by cliffs more than 300 feet high, through which rushes a torrent of almost irresistible force.* Ichang gorge is 9 miles long, and its depth nowhere less than 90 feet. To navigate a vessel up such a reach as this calls for more than

* See *Through the Yang-tse Gorges*, by A. J. Little, F.R.G.S.

ordinary seamanship, and the task is in no case free from peril; and the facts that many of the gorges on the upper river contain sunken rocks, and that all are tortuous, add greatly to their dangers. The native boatmen are, however, so expert as rarely to have an accident, and large numbers of junks work constantly up and down, even in the summer months, when the water frequently reaches a height of 60 feet above its normal winter level.

The bulk of the trade of the Yang-tse Valley is done through the treaty ports along its banks. There are only ten of these in all, though there are signs of a coming change in Chinese policy which is likely to lead to a considerable addition to their number. With the exception of Yohchau and Shanghai they are all placed on the bank of the main river, and the exceptions are in direct communication with it. Every treaty port possesses a British Consulate and a collectorate of the Imperial Maritime Customs Board. There is invariably a piece of ground known as the British concession or settlement, which is set apart for the use of our fellow-countrymen, and, in several instances, there are also foreign concessions in the hands of other countries. It is, however, remarkable that while other countries pretend to be extremely jealous of British trade influence in Central China, they do not appear to be able to hold their own in competition with us; and while new agencies are from time to time being opened by foreigners in the various treaty ports, they generally disappear after a brief and unremunerative existence. Take the case of Chungking as an example.

This is a very important city, being the most inland treaty port yet opened; it is situated at the junction of the Kia-ling and the Yang-tse, which give it a direct means of communication with the fertile valleys of Sechuan and the productive regions of Eastern Tibet. The commercial interests of foreign countries are represented in Chungking by one British merchant, three Chinese agencies of British firms, and one French merchant. The only German house established in the place closed its premises and withdrew last year. I hear that a Japanese firm is about to make the experiment of opening a branch here. About the same proportion is to be found in all the ports, with the exception of Hankow and Shanghai.

The following table shows the treaty ports at present open on the Yang-tse Kiang and its tributaries :—

	Opened	Miles from sea.	Population.
Shanghai,	1842	24	400,000
Woosung,	1898	12	35,000
Chinkiang,	1861	193	140,000
Wuhu,	1877	282	77,000
Kiukiang,	1861	466	53,000
Hankow,	1861	600	800,000
Yochau,	1898	722	60,000
Shaszi,	1896	886	74,000
Ichang,	1877	966	34,000
Chungking,	1891	1,366	109,000

Of these, the most important are Shanghai, which is practically the capital city of all foreign trade in China, and Hankow, the most central and most favourably situated of the interior settlements. Ichang was badly chosen, owing to its situation, which is just

above the first stretches of difficult navigation on the river. The actual limit between the upper and lower courses of the Yang-tse may be set at Shaszi, which has long been one of the most important of the river settlements. A considerable proportion of the inhabitants of Shaszi,—which serves as the port of the famous Tartar city of Chingchau, — live in junks moored off the embankment, which protects the adjacent low-lying lands from the river floods. These junks form a serried line for more than 2 miles, and the place affords a busy scene, being the principal port for transhipment of goods between the provinces of Sechuan and Yunnan and Hankow. Yochau, on the east side of the Tung Ting lake inlet, is the newest of the treaty ports in this part of China, having been, with Woosung, declared open only this year, but it is likely ere long to prove as valuable as any other trade centre, inasmuch as it can be reached with ease by ocean-going steamers ; and being the first port declared open in the anti-foreign province of Hunan, it will provide an outlet for much of the wealth of that fertile country, as well as tend to educate its sturdy people and bring about relations with some of the important cities on the south side of the lake.

Hankow, with its attendant cities of Hanyan and Wuchang, is probably the best known of the interior towns of China. It is an important trade centre, and the head of the most extensive system of water communications in the country. Wuchang is also the joint capital of the provinces of Hunan and Hupeh,

and the headquarters of the anti-foreign spirit in the Yang-tse Valley.

The main difficulty attending the navigation of the Yang-tse is presented by the frequent changes which occur in the level of the stream. The difference between the summer and the winter height of water varies from 20 feet to as much as 80 feet, the rise at Hankow, where the stream is more than 1 mile wide, averaging 50 feet. When at its highest, in wet years, the waters overflow their banks and spread over the low-lying lands of Hupeh and Anwei, until stretches of country 100 miles wide are under water. These floods, besides interfering with the navigation, paralyse trade, and frequently cause very considerable loss of life; but, taken as a whole, communications are kept up with remarkable regularity, and the work performed bears eloquent testimony to the admirable qualities of the average Chinaman when not acting under the influence of the official classes.

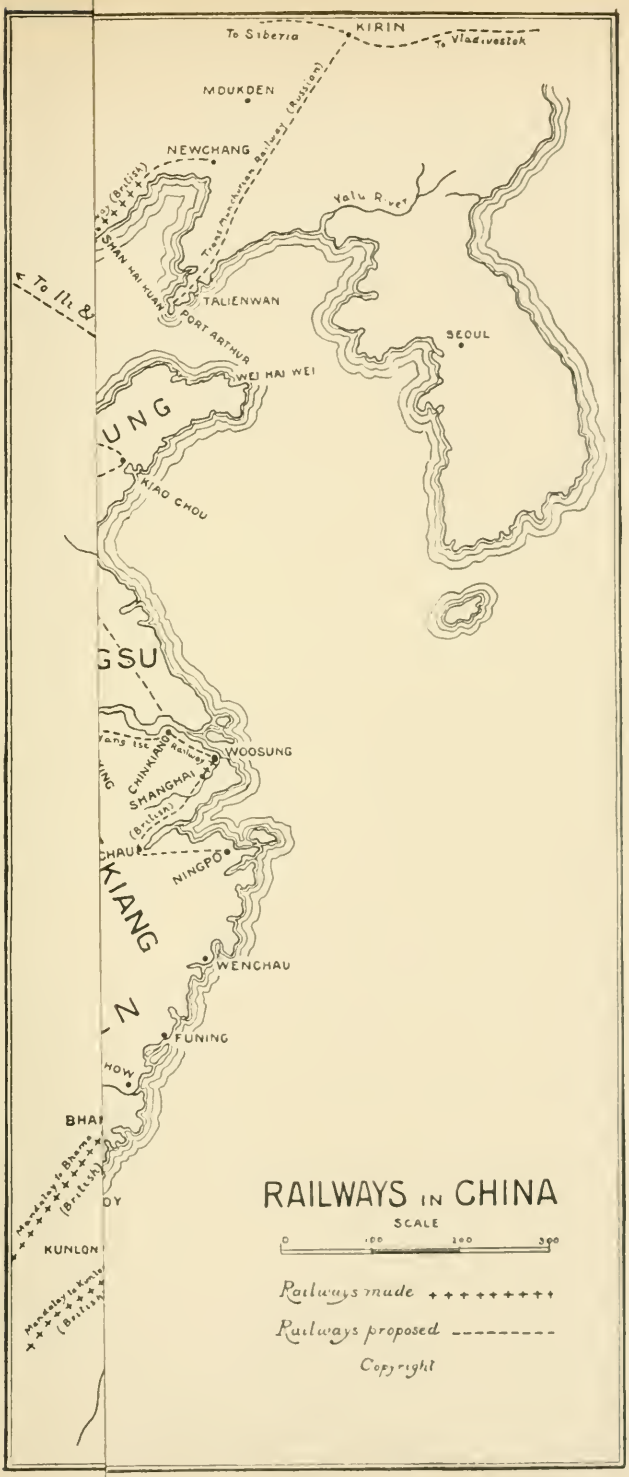
The time has now come when it is necessary for Great Britain to make up her mind definitely as to the future of the Yang-tse Valley. There are two alternatives in view, which, from their effect on China, would react very differently upon the interests of this country. The central provinces of the Chinese Empire are about to become opened to the influences of Western civilisation. They may be merged in the colonial acquisitions of Germany; they may become bracketed with Tonkin and Siam as the northern limit of Oriental France; or they may come to form the southernmost region of Asiatic Russia. Failing

these, there is only one other possible future in store: it is the informal occupation of the Yang-tse by Great Britain, and the declaration of a protectorate which ought to have been promulgated at the close of the Chino-Japanese war. To work for the opening of treaty ports may be as admirable as it is quixotic. It is, however, doubtful whether the kindness of British diplomatists, whose craving to benefit rival nations appears to be insatiable, is appreciated as it deserves to be. If we desire to hold the finest market for our trade which is still available in the Far East, it behoves us to forego those scruples which have cost us so dear and wrecked our influence in the north. We must lease some ports on the Yang-tse for ourselves. Tungchau or Chinkiang, on the north bank of the estuary, Yangchau, opposite Chinkiang, and Anching, on the borders of Hupeh, would serve the purpose. Once established firmly on the river, British interests would be safe, and the negotiations could be concluded without more than a possible grunt of dissatisfaction from the snatchers of Port Arthur. If once the opportunity be lost, if we wait until Russia discovers that she has vital interests in Sechuan, and sends a gunboat to protect them, or until France, divining our intention, hastens her policy of grab from the south, and leaves the valley of the Mekawng for that of the Yang-tse, the opportunity will have been lost, and we shall have sacrificed our chance of securing such benefits as will assuredly not offer themselves again.

CHAPTER XII.

RAILWAYS IN CHINA.

In the appreciation of the population of China, railways occupy an entirely different position from that which they hold in other parts of the world. Within the limits of the Celestial Empire the iron road has come to be regarded neither as an object of general utility nor as a joy for ever. It is held up to universal objurgation for the reason that it is novel, practical, and progressive, and on that account generally reprehensible. For your Chinese resents progress in any form. He believes in retrogression as a mark of national prosperity, and above all hates anything, however desirable otherwise, which suggests, ever so distantly, the machinations of the "foreign devil." As the Yellow Man has not yet mastered sufficient engineering knowledge to construct or work an iron road for himself, he would be compelled, should he consent to wink at the existence of so utilitarian an undertaking as a railway, to run counter to his dearest prejudice and retain the services of European or American engineers, thus actually attracting the presence of those very objectionable types of humanity he is most anxious to avoid. It follows, therefore,



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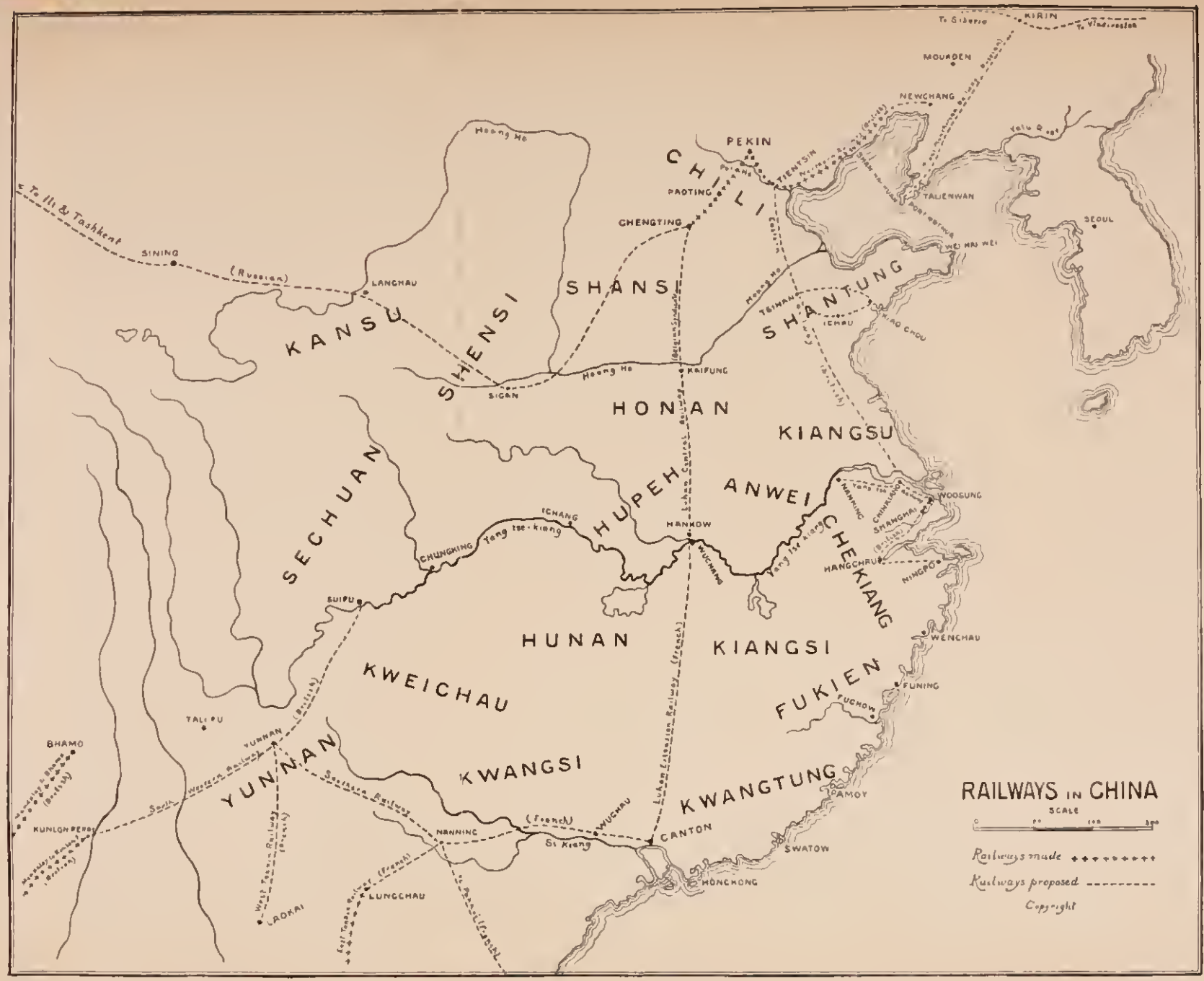

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that China stands in regard to railways much as Iceland does to snakes. Generally speaking, they are conspicuous by their absence, the exception serving only to prove the rule. The proportion of railways to the area of the United Kingdom is one mile of road to every two and three-quarter square miles of land. In Japan the railways are in evidence to the extent of one mile of line to every sixty-eight square miles of territory. In the Flowery Land permanent-way exists at the rate of one mile to 2241⅓ square miles of area, and this despite the fact that railways were introduced into China more than twenty years ago.

The construction of the first railway in China was due to the enterprise of a few of the European residents in the Shanghai district who combined to form a company with the object of constructing a line uniting Shanghai with its outer roadstead at Woosung. The distance between these places is only twelve miles, and the line was of narrow gauge. The history of this undertaking is instructive. Considerable opposition to the scheme was manifested by the mandarin from the outset, and it was only with the greatest difficulty that the strip of land required was obtained. As the bulk of the district traversed was purely agricultural, the difficulties raised were fewer than would otherwise have been the case, and, after considerable delay, the negotiations were completed, the work was accomplished, and the railway opened on the 30th June 1876. Contrary to expectation, the attitude assumed by the natives towards the railway was one of friendly curiosity. They flocked

to the railway in greater numbers than could be conveyed, the service had to be extended, and it became evident that the venture would prove a great success. But the management had not reckoned with the mandarin. A coolie, who had been bribed by the offer of a handsome payment to his family, walked on to the line in front of a train, and lay down before the approaching engine. He was immediately cut to pieces, and demands were forthwith made by the Chinese officials that the driver of the engine should be given up to them on the life for life principle. It is scarcely necessary to say that this demand was not complied with. A lengthy correspondence ensued, and the mandarin, finding that they could not make any impression on the railway people, worked on the feelings of the native population to such an extent as to cause the rabble to remain in a state of incipient revolt against the new mode of progression. It was just when the attitude of the people began to cause uneasiness in the British settlement that the Chinese Government offered to buy the railway, and, acting on the advice of Sir Thomas Wade, the British Minister at Peking, the railway company accepted the offer on the understanding that the Chinese should continue to work the line, which, despite the organised opposition, was being largely patronised by the natives. The transfer was accordingly made, and the mandarin ran the trains for a while. Then suddenly, without reason or formal notice, the rolling stock was put on board a couple of steamers and sent to Formosa, while the rails were pulled up and thrown into the sea.

The second introduction of railways into China was due to the energy and determination of Mr C. W. Kinder, a young English engineer engaged to superintend the working of the Kaiping Coal Mines, near Tongshan, in 1879. In order to simplify the handling and conveyance of the coal, Mr Kinder had constructed a narrow-gauge tramway, on which was run a service of trolleys, the traction being supplied by coolie labour. The men received ten cents a day, and the work they did was necessarily slow and unsatisfactory. After much consideration the engineer decided that it would be far better, as well as cheaper, to have a locomotive to draw the trucks to and from the pit-head. He represented his requirements to the authorities, who were greatly scandalised, and refused for one moment to consider a proposal to introduce the handiwork of white-faced heathens. But Mr Kinder was not to be so easily suppressed. He had decided that a locomotive was needed, and a locomotive he would have. As permission to buy one had been refused him, he determined to build one himself, and he set about the undertaking forthwith. He got a pair of driving-wheels from the United States. He annexed a disabled engine, and after taking it to pieces found the boiler still serviceable, and he obtained other working parts from a derelict thrashing machine. In the end he constructed a locomotive, which he painted yellow, decorated with Imperial dragons, and named the Rocket. His daring all but cost him his position. The authorities ordered the fiendish thing to be suppressed, but to little purpose. Mr Kinder con-

tinued to run his creation with excellent results in the saving of labour, time, and money, and in the end he gained his point and got the Rocket licensed by the authorities.

The spectacle of the trains of trolleys laden with coal being hauled along by the new species of "devil," brought into existence by the English engineer, served to familiarise the natives of North China with the idea of railways. Some of them had heard of the Woosung railway, and their interest in the new mode of traction was so great as to lead them to trust themselves in the empty coal trucks, and take occasional rides. And so by slow degrees the idea became less awful to contemplate, and, largely owing to the patient persistency of the engineer, a permit was at length obtained for the continuation of the road in the direction of Tientsin. The work was done by Chinese labour under the personal supervision of Mr Kinder, and, slowly but surely, it was carried forward until Tientsin was placed in communication with Shan hai kuan, on the Gulf of Pechili, where the great Wall of China terminates by the sea. The work of construction was commenced in 1887, and its success was so marked that in 1896 the continuation of the line to Peking was authorised. This section of the undertaking was completed last year, and now the road is being pushed on beyond Shan hai kuan, and some forty miles of line are almost finished in the direction of Newchang and Moukden.

The one important railway of China, known as the "Northern Railway," has not been constructed without

the expenditure of an immense amount of diplomacy, and the surmounting of many difficulties. The Celestials are, above all things, reverent in their regard for their ancestors. The youth of China obey their parents with a blind sense of loyalty which might with advantage be imitated by the rising generation in Western lands. But while John Chinaman reveres the authors of his being, he worships his ancestors, and while a daily course of lying forms part of his educational curriculum, and an occasional outrage is regarded as an "incident," the neglect of, or even a casual trespass on the grave of an ancestor is held to be a crime for which no punishment known to the ingenuity of man is sufficient. And, to make matters more complicated, the Celestials have a knack of burying their dead in all sorts of places, according to the indications of the sooth-sayers generally employed for the purpose.

To construct a railway through a country pledged to ancestor-worship is rather a big order. In the case of the Shanghai-Woosung line the plans had to be modified any number of times; indeed, seldom a day passed without some objection being taken to a particular piece of road. Thus, in one case, an embankment as planned would have had to be constructed over the grave of a deceased warrior. In another the shadow of a signal-post was found to fall, during at least an hour of the day, across the grave of one who had been murdered; and, again, the sinking of a well within a hundred yards or so of a cemetery nearly caused a riot.

The train service on China's Northern Railway comprises four trains daily in each direction; the average speed run is fifteen miles an hour. The traffic is worked by coolies, who receive a wage of two shillings a week for their services. The rails and plant came from England. It is instructive to note that the Peking terminus is a considerable distance outside the City walls, as it is generally recognised that the sanctity of the Imperial residence would be contaminated by the closer propinquity of the iron horse. The cost of the Peking line was set down by the English engineer at £280,000, equal to £4000 a mile. The estimates having been explained to Hu Chii Fei, the then Viceroy of Chili and chief mandarin of the province, that august personage undertook to raise the necessary capital, and by dint of orders, threats, and persuasions, the magistrate raised the sum of £396,000, being £5800 a mile. This transaction is a fair example of how things are done in China. Another instance of Chinese methods is afforded by a little incident which occurred at the other end of the system. Shortly before reaching Shan hai kuan, the road traverses a deep valley which is liable to being flooded at times. The English engineers who constructed the railway met the case by building a bridge or viâduct across the gorge, the bridge being rather over 1000 feet long. In 1895 the whole of the valley was flooded, and the water rose sixteen feet above the rails. After the flood had subsided it was found that the masonry had stood the strain well, but that some of the rails had been washed away. No attempt was

made to repair the damage. The track was lowered to the ground and the rails relaid across the bottom of the valley so as to offer no obstruction to future floods.

Since the Northern railway has become an established fact, the possibility of the construction of other lines has considerably improved, and more than one is already under construction. The most advanced of these is the second line between Shanghai and Woosung, now nearly completed, which runs over much the same ground as the former road which was torn up by the Chinese in 1878. A start has also been made on the main trunk line running southwards from Peking to Paotingfu and Chingting, of which more hereafter.

The question of railway communications in China is an important one which is to-day occupying the attention of engineers and financiers in many parts of the world. Quite a number of schemes have been drawn up, and several of these have been duly authorised by the central government. The routes taken by the various proposed systems of railway are shown on the accompanying map, which will convey a general idea of the various undertakings more clearly than a lengthy description would do.

The commercial and political aspects of the proposed railways may be classified under two heads, viz. : Those which affect China itself, and those which concern the relations between China and her neighbours.

The lines which will form links of communication between the Celestial Empire and foreign countries

are four in number, and are in course of construction by three great powers. Russia has two such lines in progress. England and France each have one.

The Russian routes into China, so far as they are at present mapped out, will cross the boundary between the two countries, one on the north-east and the other on the extreme west. They are the Trans-Siberian and the Central Asiatic railways. Each is, *mutatis mutandis*, in the same stage of advancement. Both are being built from both ends at once, and in point of extent and interest they exceed every similar undertaking yet achieved.

The Trans-Siberian railway will in length exceed by more than 1000 miles the Central Pacific line across America. It was planned out as far back as 1854, when the Ussuri district was occupied by Russia and Vladivostock chosen as the great naval base of Russia on the Pacific, but the work was not commenced until 1870, when surveys were made and the railway across the Urals was taken in hand. The road is now open as far as Irkutsk, rather more than 3000 miles from the Russian capital. In its general plan the Trans-Siberian railway runs across Asia in continuation of the Riazan-Samara line from Moscow. It passes nearly due east and west across Southern Siberia, over the steppes of the Orenburg district, by Petropavlovsk, Omsk, Kainsk, and Taiga,—whence a branch line of 60 miles leads to Tomsk,—to Krasnoyarsk, famed for its gold workings, and thence, bearing southwards, to Nijni-Udinsk and Irkutsk, the central capital. From Irkutsk the railway skirts the "unfathomable" Lake Baikal,

and passes viâ Chita to Stretensk. Beyond, the line reaches to the northern bank of the Amur, which it follows as far as Kabarovka. Here the river is crossed, and the line turns southwards, east of the Ussuri, until the terminus is reached outside Vladivostock, 5912 English miles from St Petersburg.

Such was the route mapped out for this huge undertaking. Begun from both ends simultaneously, a portion of the eastern section was first opened. The Ussuri section between Grafsk and Vladivostock was working in 1895, when upwards of 70,000 men were labouring on different parts of the line. It was, however, found that the engineering features of the eastern section between Kabarovka and Irkutsk were in many places difficult, and involved great and probably by political exigencies, but little has been done unexpected outlay; and for this reason, strengthened to this portion of the road beyond making surveys of amore or less rough-and-ready kind.

The difficult nature of the country round Lake Baikal has caused an important change in the plans originally decided on. The line was at first designed to pass round the north side of this inland sea; but the land was found to be little better than a morass, and it was decided to go round the south end. The surveys which have been made, however, present a number of very serious difficulties, including steep gradients, high embankments, deep cuttings through solid rock, and a tunnel 12,530 feet long. It was therefore decided to leave this section for awhile, and as an alternative it was determined to carry the line from Irkutsk direct

to the shores of the lake at Taltsinskai, and to ferry the train across 20 miles of water. In the winter, when the lake is frozen, it is intended to lay rails across the ice from shore to shore. From Baikal it is proposed to run the train over the summit level into the Valley of the Amur, where it will be left, the passengers going on board a transport which will convey them down stream over the 1200 miles to Kabarovka, whence train will be taken to Vladivostock.

But the powers conferred on Russia by the Manchurian railway treaty with China enable this combined rail and river route to be greatly modified. The treaty in question authorises the construction of a railway through Northern Manchuria from a point on the Trans-Baikal section of the Siberian road, to be determined by the Russian authorities. The effect of this will be to cut off the huge angle formed by the Amur and the Ussuri, and the saving of some 600 miles between Onon, the probable point of junction on the Russian line, and Vladivostock, as well as a marked economy in the cost of construction, owing to the absence of engineering difficulties in the Chinese territory. The total length of the Manchurian railway will be 1270 miles, of which 950 will be in China.

The general construction of the line would hardly find favour with one of our own Local Government Board inspectors. For the greater portion it has been built on the "let's get it down and the trains will do the rest" principle. The banks are loosely packed and the road is of the roughest. The stations, except

at the more important towns, are mere sheds, often constructed of sleepers or rough-hewn planks piled one on the other. The rails in use are of Russian steel, weighing 16 lb. to the foot, and are laid directly on the sleepers, the use of "chairs" being thus avoided. The method employed is to place the rail in a notch previously sawn in the sleeper and pin it to the wood by means of spikes passed through holes pierced in the flange. The gauge is that of the Russian railway system, five feet, and the greatest distance between stations shown on the original plans 40 miles. The outcome of want of care in executing the necessary work is manifest in the case of the South Ussuri section of the line at the Vladivostock end, which was completed in 1895. The permanent way is in an extremely bad state, and considerable repairs are now in progress.

The treaty authorising the construction of the Manchurian railway was signed on the 8th September 1896, and has had a very marked influence over recent developments across the Russo-Chinese Frontier. The document in question, which was signed by representatives of the Chinese Government, and the Russo-Chinese Bank, is in every respect remarkable. Among the privileges it accords, besides conceding the right of constructing railways in Manchuria, are the exploitation of coal mines, and the development of commercial and industrial enterprises. The railways to be built are to be the property of the Russo-Chinese Bank for a period of eighty years from the date of opening. It expressly states that all

passenger luggage conveyed across the frontier shall be admitted duty free, and the shares can only be held by Russian or Chinese subjects. By this agreement, Russia obtains practically exclusive rights over Manchuria, and the clause restricting the shareholders to two nationalities is an effectual bar to any foreigners obtaining influence in the management of the line. The new railway, which is now being carefully surveyed while the material for its construction is being accumulated, will run from Irkutsk to Petuna and Kirin, whence it will run southwards, avoiding Newchang, to Talienwan and Port Arthur. There will also be a branch line from Kirin to Vladivostock, which will provide a line of strategic communication which will most effectually place Manchuria at the disposal of the Czar.

The second important Russian trunk line in Asia, the Central Asiatic railway, is not being pushed on with the same energy as the more northern system. It starts from Oozoon Ada near Krasnovodsk on the Caspian, and passes through Kizilarvat, Askabad, Bokhara, Samarkand, and Tashkent, a distance of nearly 1100 miles. From this point the surveys for future extensions are still in progress, but it is settled that from Tashkent the road is to be prolonged northwards until it effects a junction with the Trans-Siberian system at Omsk, while an extension will be made in a north-easterly direction through Semiretschinsk to Kuldja, on the borders of Chinese Turkistan.

No official announcement has been made as to

the further prolongation of the Trans-Caspian line beyond this point, but it is not a matter of any great difficulty to outline the intentions of the Russian engineers. The railway will be carried from Kuldja across Jungaria and the western borders of the Gobi Desert to Sining on the great caravan route between Tibet and China. Thence it will pass through Lanchau and Siganfu to Tai Yuen, and on viâ Chingting and Paoting to Peking. The railway between Peking and Chingting is now in course of construction, and the fact that the branch which is to be made from there to Sigan is in Russian hands affords strong evidence as to the correctness of my view.

Turning to the means of communication between the French province of Tonkin and China proper, the scheme of construction is neither so ambitious nor so far-reaching as those detailed above. The great trunk line which is to unite Annam and Tonkin with the eighteen provinces starts from Haifong, and runs in a fairly straight line nearly due north to Langsen, crossing the Chinese frontier close to Ningming, and running thence to Lungchou, whence the road is continued to Nanningfu on the West River. It is understood that the French authorities have quite recently obtained a concession for the construction of a branch line thence to Pakhoi and to Canton, while another branch is authorised by the Convention of 1895 between Loakai and Yunnanfu. In addition to these undertakings, for which the consent of the Chinese authorities has been obtained, a connecting

line is proposed, running entirely in Chinese territory, between Yunnanfu and Nanning. The construction of these railways would not, however, materially affect the relations between the Celestial Empire and the outer world, like the Russian lines, inasmuch as the French colonies in Cochin China are only partially settled, and neither their position nor their opportunities, as commercial centres, are suitable for the exercise of either political or commercial influence.

The construction of a connecting railway between India and China has long been acknowledged to be the great desideratum for the adequate support of British interests in the East, and the subject has attracted the attention of all the most expert of our Chinese specialists. For a long time the authorities aimed at the construction of a road in connection with the Burma railways, to run from Bhamo to Momein and Talifu, but the physical difficulties met with proved so serious as to cause the scheme to be practically abandoned. An alternative route, first suggested by Mr A. R. Colquhoun, who was formerly deputy commissioner in Burma, has been adopted, and is now in an advanced state of preparation. The line is a continuation of the main Rangoon and Mandalay railway, and runs from the latter city to Kunlon Ferry on the Salween River, which forms the boundary between British and Chinese territory in these parts. From the Salween the line will be continued to Yunnanfu and to Suifu on the Yang-tse, which it will thus bring into direct overland communication with British India. The Kunlon Ferry line

will be opened throughout its entire length of 270 miles in 1899, and it is believed that the difficulties reported to exist in the 280 miles of mountain country, between the Salween and Yunnan and Talifu, have been exaggerated. It is now stated that beyond the necessity of bridging the Mekawng at a point where it is several miles wide, no very costly feats of engineering will be required. The importance of this line to British interests in China cannot well be over-estimated. Besides saving several weeks' time between this country or India and Western and Central China, the railway, when completed, will open up possibilities of trade which have not hitherto been enjoyed, and it is undoubtedly destined to aid in bringing about a better understanding between British traders and the hitherto exclusive inhabitants of Yunnan and Sechuan.

Of the railways destined to effect the development of the interior provinces of China, one which deserves especial prominence is the so-called Lu-han line, the future Great Central Railroad of China. This undertaking is designed to place Peking, the northern capital, in communication with Hankow, the most important commercial centre inland, and the great distributing depôt of Western China. The scheme has been under consideration for a number of years, it having long since been recognised that the first railway necessary for the opening up of China was a north and south road which would serve to unite the more important cities of the Empire with one another, and, the main line once constructed, any number of

branches can be added to connect the provincial capitals with the central trunk. The first suggestion of the idea is credited to a Chinese merchant, who had visited India and studied the railway system there, and he is said to have obtained some eight years ago the necessary authority to construct the line. The conditions with which the concession was saddled were, however, so disadvantageous to the grantee that he was unable to find any capitalists to back him, and was in turn refused support by French, German, and British financiers. The matter thus hung fire for about eight years, until at last a syndicate of merchants at Brussels determined to try and carry the thing through, in the hope of finding in China a more profitable market for their wares than they had found in the Congo Free State. The length of the proposed line is, however, considerable, being estimated at nearly 1000 miles, and as some of the necessary engineering works are very elaborate, the amount of capital required will be considerable. The syndicate endeavoured to raise this capital by the issue of bonds at $4\frac{1}{2}\%$ interest, but without success, and it was only in the beginning of the present year that an offer was received from the Russo-Chinese Bank, which is, as already stated, more nearly akin to a branch of the Russian foreign office than to a commercial concern, to find the necessary capital on terms which included the possession of a controlling voice in the management of the line. Such is the history of this much discussed railway, which it will be seen has fallen into Russian hands through the withholding of the requisite means of support by other

nations. Had the British Government chosen to take the matter up—as one would have supposed they would deem it politic to do, seeing that the line will pass through the heart of the Yang-tse Valley, and provide access to those districts of China which till now have been the especial trade preserve of this country—there would have been no one to say them nay, and we should have secured to ourselves a permanent stake in the country which would have gone a long way towards supporting our prestige and consolidating our commerce. But our Government refused to have anything to do with the undertaking, preferring a policy of abstention as being most in accordance with colonial precedent; and the railway will, unless very drastic measures be taken, become to all intents and purposes a Russian State railway, controlled from St Petersburg and run in the interests of Russian trade.

But the importance of the Lu-han line does not end here. While only contemplating a present union between Peking and Hankow, another scheme is afoot to continue the undertaking southwards from Hankow to Canton and Nanning, where a junction would be effected with the southern railways already referred to. The Hankow-Canton scheme has been entrusted to an American-Chinese syndicate, which has already deposited a large sum as earnest of the work being carried through.

The Northern railway of China has been already dealt with, and it only remains to describe the German and the British aims in regard to Chinese lines.

The railways designed by Germany are restricted to

the province of Shantung, which has been made over to the Fatherland as her exclusive sphere of influence. They are comparatively insignificant, but designed with especial reference to the development of the great mineral wealth of the district. The system proposed comprises two railways between Kiaochau and Tsinanfu, the one going direct from one place to the other viâ Pingtu; the other describing a semicircle with Ichaufu at its apex. From Tsinanfu, the lines combine and run to Tientsin, where a junction will be effected with the Northern railway to Manchuria.

It is somewhat surprising to find that Great Britain, whose interests in China exceed those of all the other nations combined, and whose trade is more than two-thirds of the total recorded, is concerned in so few railway schemes for the exploitation of the country. Only three concessions have been obtained for the construction of railways designed by British enterprise or financed with British capital, and of these one is at the present moment in dispute. The first of these, and by far the most important, is a line which, starting from Ningpo, and running through Hangchau, Shanghai, and Woosung, will serve both Chinkiang and Nanking. This road, which originated in the minds of a few British residents in Shanghai, is destined to develop ere long into an East and West trunk route, which will one day traverse the whole of the Yang-tse Valley from Chekiang to Sechuan. The second railway due to British enterprise is the extension of the Northern line from Shan hai kuan, on the Gulf of Pechili, to

Newchang, designed to retrieve the blow aimed at the commerce of that important treaty port by its avoidance of the Manchurian railway about to be constructed by the Russians from Port Arthur and Talienwan to Kirin. This undertaking, which is of the first importance to British commercial interests, is to be financed by the Hong-kong and Shanghai Bank, provided we succeed in upholding the terms of the concession which was granted some time ago, but which is now objected to by the representatives of the Czar, who desire to see Newchang cut off from railway facilities in order that their own port at Talienwan may usurp the trade which has hitherto found its way to the head of the Gulf of Liao-tong.* The third line which it is understood will be controlled by British capital is that which will run from Tientsin to the banks of the Yang-tse Kiang, immediately opposite Chinkiang. This railway will most likely prove a very remunerative undertaking, supplying, as it will do, a rapid and direct route between the Yang-tse Valley and Shanghai and the Northern capital. The negotiations have been somewhat delayed by the Germans protesting against the road passing through the western limits of the province of Shantung, where they claim the exclusive possession of all railway rights; but the matter appears to be in a fair way of being arranged, and it is expected that the East Coast trunk-line will be one of the first to be constructed.

* The contract for the construction of this line was signed on the 10th October, the Hong-kong and Shanghai Bank undertaking to find a sum of £2,250,000 for the purpose, and the Chinese Government guaranteeing 5 per cent. interest, and giving a charge upon the Peking Shan hai kuan line as security.

In addition to the foregoing there is a much discussed scheme for the construction of a railway from Canton to Kauloon opposite Hong-kong, but the line has not yet been officially authorised, and there are many difficulties to be arranged before it could be begun.

Such are the proposals at present to the fore regarding the construction of railways in China, and it only remains to be seen which of them will be finally carried into effect.

WEST GATE, NINGPO.

CHAPTER XIII.

CHINESE POLITICS.

The newspaper reader who follows the development of affairs in China, cannot but be struck by the remarkable want of sympathy which is apparent in all negotiations between the Celestial Government and foreign powers. Concessions, treaties, and increased privileges are obtained from the Chinese, not by dint of a diplomatic exchange of views, but by covert threats and the suggestion of an appeal to arms. The facilities for opening up the country, which are from time to time grudgingly granted by the Tsungli Yamen, are due, not to the least desire to enter into friendly intercourse with European nations, but to the fears entertained by that sapient body lest, in the event of its proving obdurate and refusing the demands preferred, it may in the end have to meet claims still harder to endure, or possibly witness a repetition of that foreign occupation of Peking which so greatly alarmed Chinese officialdom in 1860.

Owing to its supineness, its conceit, and its dislike of anything which savours of reform, the Chinese Government is the merest creature of circumstances. The events of recent years have served only to teach it

that the country is incapable of offering resistance to a foreign foe; they have not stimulated it to make any effort to modernise its army or its navy, or to adopt any other precautions for the defence of the Empire. China is, in short, dominated by a number of officials who wish neither for progress or development of the resources of the country committed to their charge, and who are too old to learn, too foolish to profit by the learning of others. The Empire, given over to ignorance, intolerance, and superstition, remains a blot on the face of the earth.

Notwithstanding the thievishness of the governing class, and the want of anything like a national programme at Peking, there is in China a portion of the population which is by no means in accord with the mandarins' views as to the interests of the country. The merchants who have come into contact with foreign traders in such places as Shanghai, Hankow, and Tientsin have not been slow in appreciating the merits of Western ideas, while the small but increasing number of young Chinamen who are sent to Europe to be educated are gradually tending to bring about a better understanding between the natives and the settlers at the treaty ports. Unfortunately, the influence thus exerted is still but as a drop in the ocean, and, so far as it concerns the great bulk of the Chinese, it cannot be said to produce any appreciable result.

The population of the Chinese Empire is estimated at over 400,000,000, and of these it is safe to assume that 350,000,000 have never heard of Great Britain or

Russia. It seems an absurd statement to make, but a very little calculation will serve to show that it is well within the mark. The total population of the treaty ports is less than 10,000,000. The only other city open to foreigners is Peking, with an estimated population of under 2,000,000. The number of the Europeans who have succeeded in penetrating the interior—outside, that is, the immediate neighbourhood of the treaty ports—is very small indeed; so that the total population which comes habitually into contact with foreigners is less than 12,000,000, and the balance of thirty-eight millions required to make up the fifty is far larger than is necessary to include those natives who occasionally visit the foreign settlements.

To this remarkable ignorance on the part of the bulk of the Chinese population is due the position of affairs in regard to foreign influence in China. The exclusiveness of the mandarin finds a congenial soil among the unenlightened masses, and these are easily stirred up to commit outrages against the foreigners whom the officials teach them to regard as "barbarians."

Until the outbreak of the first Chinese war with Great Britain, the Celestials clung firmly to the belief that their country was rendered impregnable by the ability of the mandarin and the utter insufficiency of all other nations. That air of superiority which the Chinese had always been encouraged to cultivate made it impossible for them to realise that a nation of mere traders, such as the English, would dare actually to attack China. It was only after a considerable

portion of the Chinese coast line had been invaded and occupied, that the Celestials deemed it wiser to temporise and consent to the signing of a treaty, which it was intended to repudiate immediately the desired result had been attained. The repetition in 1860 of the lesson which had been wasted in 1842, proved efficacious, and the capture of Peking caused the idea to dawn upon the Celestial intelligence that the "barbarians" were after all more than a match for the natives, and when, three years later, the British offered to assist the Chinese in quelling the Taeping rebellion, the proposal was at once accepted. The achievements of Gordon, with his "ever-victorious" army which never exceeded 5000 men, impressed the authorities deeply, and they showed their appreciation of the service which had been rendered them by the British officer, by conferring on him the most dignified order of the Yellow Jacket, an honour which is restricted by custom to twelve of the Emperor's highest councillors. But they did not go beyond this. The idea of remodelling the army on the lines laid down by Major Gordon did not occur to the Government, or, if it did occur, was not deemed worthy of adoption. No reforms were introduced into the administration of the provinces concerned in the rebellion, nor were the services retained of any of those Europeans who had been engaged with Gordon in suppression of the Taepings. The foreigners had done their work well. They had been paid and even honoured. The necessity for their services had disappeared and they could go. China did not see her way to sink her past

traditions and place her trusted councillors under the control of foreign ability.

And so it has remained. In moments of emergency the Tsungli Yamen does not hesitate to apply to foreigners for aid, but as soon as the necessity has passed the advisers are discarded and, as often as not, their works destroyed. Thus, in 1884, when the French were expected to attack Peking, the Chinese, realising at the last moment that things looked threatening, sought the advice of military experts as to the defences of the capital. Except the construction of some forts at Shan hai kuan, none of the suggested safeguards were adopted, and the scheme which was submitted for the safeguarding of Peking from a foreign attack, remains among the archives of the Tsungli Yamen, having failed to lead to any steps being taken for the attainment of the desired end.

The Chinese are well aware that they are absolutely at the mercy of any foreign power which chooses to attack them. They rely for their protection, not on the few forts which exist at such places as the mouth of the Pei Ho, or the bravery of their vaunted Manchu fighting men, but on the well-known jealousy of the powers among themselves and the success with which the wily members of the Yamen hope to play off one against the other. The mandarin realise that under existing circumstances it would be absolutely impossible to prevent a foreign army from landing in China, owing to the great extent of coast line to be protected, but they refuse to permit any foreigner to undertake the

construction of the defences which have been suggested to them, because their conceit will not suffer them to allow a "barbarian" to direct work which they consider should remain exclusively under their own control. The attempts which have, for the benefit of the country, been made in the direction of foreign employment, have all failed for this very reason. The circumstances of the engagements of Captain Osborn and Captain Lang have been detailed. Of the many attempts made by foreigners to instruct the Chinese in the art of warfare, the only one which produced any tangible result was the establishment of the first arsenal in China by Dr, now Sir Halliday Macartney in 1863.

Despite the events which have occurred during the past few years, the rulers of China are as antagonistic as of yore to the foreign idea, with the difference that they have been taught that it is not safe to heap insults or indignities on the visitors to their shores. The lack of public opinion throughout the country and the readiness of the people to obey the wishes of the mandarin render the officials masters of the situation, and their power is consistently exercised to delay progress and to circumvent the foreigner at every turn. The few officials who are sufficiently high-minded or well-informed to appreciate the value of Western ideas, refrain from using them, either from a dread that the introduction of Europeans into the country will tend to destroy their influence, or because they find that it pays them to keep the foreigner, and more especially the Britisher, at arm's-length.

Thus we find that Li Hung Chang, a man of great experience and ability, who has had exceptional opportunities for gauging the value of occidental methods, has withheld his assistance from the British cause, in order that he might play into the hands of Russia. And Chang Chi Tung, viceroy of the provinces of Hunan and Hupeh, and said to be the most honest and level-minded of the mandarin, although he offers a remarkable instance of a progressive Chinaman in his opinions, and although he is strongly in favour of railways and similar undertakings, is yet an avowed opponent of foreign intercourse, and he refuses to have dealings with the British who visit his capital for the purpose of obtaining facilities for the exploitation of the country.

When first the British sought trade facilities in China, their overtures were met by a resolve on the part of the Chinese to drive them out of the country at all costs. To-day the efforts of the mandarin are devoted to the limitation of foreign influence in China, and the restriction of the opportunities accorded them for constructing works of utility. The carrying out of these aims results not only in the partial crippling of foreign effort, but in retarding the natural progress of the country. For the Chinese are too well acquainted with the mandarin methods to feel justified in trusting them, and thus, while there is a very considerable amount of money hoarded up in China, no capitalist would ever entrust his wealth to the keeping of men of whom as a class the dishonesty is proverbial. The officials in turn recognise the position, and are all the

more determined to prevent foreign influence from becoming developed in the interior.

This determination is rendered all the more persistent on account of the experience acquired during the past. The creation of the department of Imperial Maritime Customs caused a considerable diminution in the profits which the various officials derived from taxation. Until its birth in 1854, the viceroys and governors raised their own duties, of which the bulk found its way into the official pocket, and the institution of a board under foreign control deflected large sums from the officials to the treasury at Peking. The views of the mandarin on this subject are very pronounced, and it is recorded by Mr Gundry that a Chinese official declared the murder of Mr Margary to be due to a determination to ward off the fiscal changes which were expected to follow the opening to foreign trade of the country through which he was passing. Another instance of the pertinacity with which the mandarin attempt to keep the foreigner at bay, is afforded by the fact that when, some time ago, the "China Merchants' Steam Navigation Company"—a flourishing concern run by Chinese capital and managed by natives—sought permission to trade on the Si Kiang, they were refused for the reason that, if the desired permit were given, foreigners would be sure to want the same privilege.* The authorities thus placed on record the fact that they would rather withhold a benefit from a native undertaking than run the risk of having to accord a similar benefit to foreigners.

* *China, Past and Present.*

The most marked feature in the internal policy of China is the prohibitive taxation which is levied on inland trade. So disproportionate is the weight of the likin and customs dues imposed at every turn, that the trade of the country is paralysed ; and it is no unusual thing for goods to be conveyed by the most circuitous routes, in order to avoid a likin barrier or a town ruled by a more than usually greedy mandarin. In the South, the merchandise which formerly found its way to the sea by the Si Kiang now avoids the endless extortion inflicted along the entire route, by quitting Chinese territory and crossing, *viâ* Langsen or Laokai, into French territory, and passing down the Sankoi River to the sea, whence it is often re-imported into China by way of either Pakhoi or Canton. In the North a saving of duty is effected by following devious routes, as reported by Mr S. F. Mayers, who passed through the northern provinces on a tour of exploration in the spring of 1898.

A curious feature in the carrying trade here is the fact that foreign piece-goods, yarns, etc., starting from Tientsin for Peking and other northern markets, take the roundabout way of going by river to the market towns of Liuliho and Huangtupo, and are then carried by cart, pack, or wheelbarrow to the capital. This enables the importer to avoid the numerous likin stations on the Pei Ho—the natural passage of trade from Tientsin to Peking—and he finds it cheaper to carry his goods 30 miles by road from Liuliho than it would be to carry them 14 miles from Tungchou to the capital.

The whole policy of the Chinese officials is directed towards restricting within as small limits as possible, the privileges afforded by the various treaties signed between China and the Powers ; and what cannot be

effected by direct opposition is sometimes achieved by working on the rivalry of the nations concerned.

The opinions held by the responsible members of the Chinese Government are guided by a conceit which is limited only by self-interest. It is not what is best for the country, but what will be most beneficial to the rulers, that concerns the Tsungli Yamen, and every negotiation in which they are concerned is influenced by this consideration. Beset by the demands and the conflicting interests of at least four Powers, the authorities at Peking, no bad judges of character, keep each at such a distance as they think it likely to tolerate, and as Great Britain has always proved the most lenient of the taskmasters of China, her representatives are, as a rule, accorded less consideration than those of her rivals. Russia and Germany, having shown themselves less inclined to temporise and more insistent in their demands, have generally received more prompt satisfaction of their desires. But while the Tsungli Yamen has accustomed itself to face the inevitable, and to concede with as good a grace as possible that which it cannot withhold; its members realise that Great Britain is, in every respect, a lighter taskmaster and a more desirable ally than either of her rivals, and the only question which suggests itself in this connection is why, holding such an opinion, the Chinese have not before now arrived at an *entente cordiale* with this country? The explanation of this apparent anomaly is twofold. In the first place, the Tsungli Yamen has learned that it cannot hoodwink Russia or Germany

so easily as it has found practicable in the case of England. In the second, it dreads the downrightness of British diplomacy and the straightforwardness of British methods. The wonderfully successful organisation developed by Sir Robert Hart has not, despite its immense utility to the national revenue, served to educate the officials in the advantages of honest administration, and the very success of the Imperial Maritime Customs system causes it to be regarded with marked disfavour by the mandarin.

The Celestial love of soft-speaking, with its accompaniment of evasion and procrastination, is apt to be outraged by the bluff outspokenness of our diplomatists, while there is a well-defined fear that the limitation of the opportunities for official peculation brought about by the placing of the Maritime Customs in the hands of foreigners would be further increased if they were entrusted with the manipulation of other sources of revenue. It would, of course, be futile to query the correctness of the latter supposition, and it would also be vain to deny the effect it has had on the feeling of the mandarin towards British influence. The Chinese would have not the slightest objection to the construction of public works with foreign capital, nor would they resent the foreigner finding his way into the farthest recesses of the Empire, provided he did not bring with him that tendency to "look into things," which ends by insisting on the introduction of a new code of commercial morality such as is totally opposed to Chinese ideas.

In the cases of Russia, France, and Germany, the

aims are territorial and not commercial. Russia uses her commerce, which is practically restricted to the import of oil in exchange for tea, merely as a means of driving the thin end of the wedge into the country, with a view to the future cession of provinces. France, under the pretence of desiring to cultivate the trade of Tonkin, seeks to assert her sway over the southern provinces, while Germany is, for the present at least, content with her recently acquired naval base, with the province of Shantung for a commercial preserve. Neither of these professes to pay much attention to Chinese methods, nor is it suggested that so long as their spheres are respected, they would be disposed to interfere with the time-honoured methods of spoliation which are so general among the mandarin. Recognising these points, the Tsungli Yamen, unable to free itself altogether from foreign interference, has to choose between the loss of territory and the lapse of opportunity for misgovernment, and, failing a device for avoiding both calamities, the astute officials infinitely prefer the gradual partition of the country.

The one factor which, up to a certain point, might exert its influence in the immediate future of the country, remains practically an unknown quantity. The Emperor Kwangsu, the nominal ruler of the Chinese Empire, succeeded to the throne in his infancy, and is to-day in his twenty-eighth year. He is supposed to be a weak prince, largely under the influence of the Empress Dowager and the ministers who have been associated with her during the regency.

It is understood that, doubtless with a view to the retention of power by others, Kwangsu has been encouraged in dissolute habits, and that he entered on his reign in 1889, a sickly youth, deficient in will, and exhibiting an ignorance of affairs remarkable even in a Chinaman, and so far nothing has transpired to discredit this rumour. It is easy to understand that such a ruler is largely at the mercy of his ministers, and the various edicts which have been published in Kwangsu's name are, more likely than not, due to the instrumentality of Li Hung Chang and the royal Princes by whom the Emperor is surrounded. Nor do these demand any very great expression of confidence in their ultimate results. Situated as China is to-day, it is natural to suppose that the ministers of state would strive to anticipate the expected demands of the Powers for reforms by the promulgation of orders for the carrying out of designs suggested by the ministers resident at Peking, but without the slightest intention of having those orders obeyed. Viewed in this light, the edicts published at brief intervals during the present year lose something of their value, and one is tempted to express a doubt whether any of them are likely to become effectual so long as the present order of things continues in Peking.

Among the more important of the Imperial rescripts which have been recently published in the Emperor's name, are: the Imperial edict directing the Tsungli Yamen to establish a patent office for the encouragement of inventors; the appointment of Prince Ching

to superintend the erection of a Chinese university, which is to be conducted on European lines and under the educational control of Western teachers; the Imperial edict ordering the establishment of an universal postal service; and a third edict according universally the right of memorialising the throne, and ordering the publication of monthly accounts of the national receipts and expenditure throughout the Empire. In the event of these reforms being carried out, they will, without doubt, tend to bring China far more nearly in accord with the comity of nations than she has ever been before, but the student of Chinese modes of thought is tempted to doubt the intentions of the Government, even if the recent announcements be really the outcome of a desire on the part of the Emperor to develop his country. What makes the proposals still more doubtful is the fact that such a decided change of front would point to an entire change of policy on the part of the Chinese Government, a volte-face which is not indicated by the action it has taken in other matters of present moment.

There can be little hope for China as a nation, so long as the existing system of administrative appointments, with its resulting mandarindom, continues. The present official element is without question the curse of the Empire, and so long as it endures it will continue to militate against the welfare of the people and the best interests of the State. In order to end the condition of things I have described, it would be necessary to cast some thousands of officials loose

upon the people they have so long misgoverned, and the probable outcome of such a course cannot be regarded with composure. Failing this, the only prospect for China is gradual absorption into other nations, with the possibility of being partly overrun by the Japanese, who would probably, ere this, have become the rulers of the country but for the tacit opposition of Russia and her allies.

The defences of the country are lamentably weak and the army is practically untrained. There is no reason why China should not possess a military force fully capable of holding its own against all comers, but the necessary training is made impossible by the conduct of the mandarin, who resent the entrusting of power to foreigners, but are themselves quite incapable of drilling the men. There is no question but that if only he were properly instructed and well led, the Chinese soldier would render an extremely good account of himself. The subject of military organisation has been fully dealt with by General Gordon, who knew the Celestial better than most people and recognised his possibilities.

China's power lies in her numbers, in the quick moving of her troops, in the little baggage they require, and in their few wants. It is known that men armed with sword and spear can overcome the best regular troops equipped with breech-loading rifles, if the country is at all difficult, and if the men with spears and swords outnumber their foe ten to one. If this is the case where men are armed with spears and swords, it will be much truer when those men are themselves armed with breech-loaders.*

So long as the present condition of things continues,

* Report on Military Capacity of the Chinese.

the training of an effective army becomes a physical impossibility, and until China is able to defend herself, she will remain at the mercy of her despoilers. It is a maxim well known and generally admitted by those who have studied China, that "No progress can be made by the Peking Government," and the dictum is justified by the fact that progress must tend to the Government's extinction, and therefore of its own initiative it will never move at all. The Government of China, placed in a distant corner of the great Empire it controls, is out of touch with the people, whom it endeavours to keep ignorant and intolerant lest they should outstrip the ruling power, and perhaps compass its effacement. The great strength of the Government rests on the isolation with which it is surrounded. Domiciled at Peking, far away from the great business centres of the Empire, the Emperor and his surroundings become a mystery to the masses, and by their unfamiliarity command respect.

So long as the Central Government of China isolates itself from the Chinese people by residing aloof at Peking, so long will the Chinese people have to remain passive under the humiliations which come upon them through the non-progressive and destructive disposition of their Government. These humiliations will be the chronic state of the Chinese people, until the Central Government moves from Peking and re-unites itself to its subjects. No army, no purchase of ironclads will enable China to withstand a first-class power so long as she keeps her queen bee at the entrance of her hive. There is, however, the probability that a proud people like the Chinese may sicken at their continual eating of humble pie, that the Peking Government, by skirting too closely the precipice of

war, may fall into it, and then the sequence may be anarchy and rebellion throughout the kingdom.*

The Chinese themselves realise the weakness of the capital and would gladly see it moved, but there is another factor in the position which has to be borne in mind. The reigning dynasty is an usurping one, and as such is hated in many parts of the country. For several generations represented by strong and capable rulers, the new order became accepted as a race of conquerors. Of late years the stock has sadly deteriorated, and, failing a very marked and unexpected development on the part of the present occupant of the throne, it may be regarded as safe to predict that the line of the Manchu Emperors is doomed. It is on the question of the succession that the future of China depends, and it is to be feared that the only change likely to benefit the Empire is one which must necessarily be brought about by a successful rebellion or a civil war; for mere change of dynasty at Peking could only be effected with the assistance of the mandarin, who, by way of protecting their interests, would choose either a minor to act under their guardianship, or a weakling who would continue on the lines of his predecessors. The only hope for China politically is a clean sweep of the existing order, accompanied by such a change of ideas in the administration of the country as that which occurred in Japan in 1868. This fact is just beginning to be appreciated by the educated classes in China; but they do not yet appreciate the need of reversing the policy

* Gordon.

of isolation which has been so long maintained, and of entering into the comity of nations with a conviction that there is much to be learned from the outer world, and that to any nation, however ancient it may be, a continuous policy of retrogression is sure to prove disastrous.

VILLAGE NEAR DALENSIN.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SITUATION.

Corrupt to the core, ill-governed, lacking cohesion, and without the means of defending herself against disruption from within, or aggression from without, China stands to-day a sort of political Tom Tiddler's ground, on which the representatives of the various Powers disport themselves while making up their minds as to which particular corner they will finally occupy. Owing to the series of events which began with the occupation of Kiaochau by Germany and is not yet complete, the country has become a veritable bone of contention, over which Western nations growl at one another, without proceeding to blows, and the most likely result appears to be the eventual partition of the country into a series of dependencies, which, under the name of spheres of influence, will become appurtenances of the European Powers.

The reader who has followed me thus far will have a fairly clear idea of the history of foreign aggression in China. He will have noted how the Chinese have, from the outset, vainly striven to evade the incursion of the "outer barbarian," and how, after finding that

this plan was impracticable, they devoted all their energies to retarding the growth of foreign influence and weakening the stability of the foreigner's foothold, within the limits of the Celestial Empire. In this connection, the attitude assumed by the invaders is of even more importance than that of the invaded, and it may not be inappropriate if I briefly recall the more essential motives underlying the policies adopted by the several nations which have achieved a footing in territories which are nominally under the rule of the "Son of Heaven."

Great Britain, the most enterprising, succeeded before any of the great nations of the West in forming relations with China. Her aims were purely commercial, and her instincts were leading her to procure fresh markets for her produce and new centres for her trade. Without competitors of her own calibre as this country then was, it rested entirely with her representatives at home to say how far the national interests should be pushed in the opening up of the newly-discovered but jealously-guarded land of promise, and, from the very first, the British representatives pitched their tune in a minor key, ordaining that force should be used only as a last resource, and in order to punish outrages against life or property.

Russia, in the early days of attempted intercourse with China, felt her way with that irresistible ability which has always directed her aims. What Britain effected by commercial intercourse and negotiation, Muscovy achieved by the display of force, and, while

this country remained restricted to the estuary of the Canton River as its sphere of operation, the emissaries of the Czar annexed whole districts on the Amur, without so much as formulating a demand for their surrender. The difference in the methods of the two countries is important, marking as it does the line of demarcation between their policies, which after long years of gradual expansion have at last ended in bringing them cheek by jowl in North China, with possibilities yet to be developed. In one respect, however, the action taken by the Russians is the opposite of that taken by the British. The pioneers from St Petersburg have always aimed at acquiring territory for the aggrandisement of their country. The British explorers have sought but to open up new trade routes and to provide for the extension of international commerce. Our desires have been such as could only benefit the Chinese equally with ourselves, while the success of Russian ambition implies the spoliation of China and the loss of prestige to Peking.

The causes which have led to the appearance of France upon the scene have differed from both those described. Without either the ability to build up an over-sea trade, or the faculty of creating a colonial empire, France, times out of number, has sought to overcome threatened trouble at home by indulging in a "glory hunt" abroad, and her expeditions in the Far East, from the time when Baron Gros joined Lord Elgin in his expedition to the Pei Ho to the seizure of Tonkin, have all been the outcome of a desire to gain the *éclat* of an addition to the empire of France,

without reference to the subsequent prospects of the various "white elephants" she has acquired.

The case of Germany is another variant from the foregoing. Nominally acquired as a solatium for an insult to the German flag, the seizure of Kiaochau was really the outcome of a resolution long previously matured. As far back as 1896 the German Government had formulated a Far Eastern policy, and its realisation waited only for a suitable opportunity. The policy of the fatherland in regard to China is largely commercial, and the development of the Shantung promontory is being hurried on in every way, in the hope that its success will, in some measure at least, recompense the nation for the failure of its African colonies. In addition to her commercial objects, Germany hopes by the utilisation of the natural resources of Kiaochau to construct a naval base and coaling station, which will largely strengthen her influence among the nations, and make her an effective power in Eastern seas.

The differences in the aims and interests, as well as the opportunities of these four Powers, have by a process of natural selection tended to mark out a map of spheres in which their influence has become developed. I am desirous of laying particular stress on this point, as I hold that the question of spheres, or of indefinite rights and equal opportunities, is not one which is decided by the wishes of diplomatists, but is dictated entirely by the laws of propinquity, ability, and relative strength. Thus Great Britain, which first obtained a footing in the province of Kwangtung,

gradually felt her way as one port after another was opened to her merchants, until to-day her interests are represented along the entire coast line and up at least three of the rivers of China. But, by an unfortunate oversight at the outset, the ports opened by the various treaties which were due to British action were neither ceded nor placed under the control of British representatives. With the exception of Hong-kong, the Chinese territory rendered available for foreign intercourse was made international, and, as a consequence, the more important of the coast towns became mere places of call for Europeans, the French, German, and other traders being accorded equal rights with the British. Owing to this fact, Great Britain cannot be said to have developed any topographical claim to a sphere of influence along the coast, for other nations have equal rights at every place in which her subjects are permitted to reside. Had a different course been pursued, the result as regards equal facilities for trade would have been the same, but the position of this country in China would have been very different. As an example of what might have been achieved, it is only necessary to glance at Hong-kong, which, though a British colony, is open to the trade of all nations on even more favourable terms than any one of the treaty ports, inasmuch as Victoria, the capital, is a free port, while the treaty ports are subject to maritime customs dues on all imports. The mistake made in this respect at the start, when no country could have urged any objection, has been continued to the present time, and we stand in the anomalous

position of holding some seventy per cent. of the whole trade of China in our hands, of boasting the allegiance of more than half the total number of Europeans in the Empire, and of possessing more widely-spread interests in the country than any other foreign nation, while we actually control less territory and possess fewer privileges as regards our right of exploitation than any one of the other Western powers.

The tendency of foreigners sojourning in a strange country is to congregate, and the direction in which the members of a particular nation are impelled depends on the facilities of communication and the privileges which the parent state is able to obtain for its representatives. These causes have led to the gradual absorption by Russia of the Northern provinces of China, which are in closest proximity to the Siberian frontier, while the existence of the French colony of Tonkin, in the South, has caused an influx of French traders and capital to the Southern districts. In this very natural way have the two extremes of China Proper come to be the spheres of French and Russian influence, while the acquisition of Kiaochau by Germany and the rights of exploitation accorded her throughout the province of Shantung have similarly created a German sphere in the great North-East promontory of the middle kingdom. Great Britain alone stands possessed of no natural sphere, for the reason that, while her interests are spread all over the eighteen provinces, she has abstained from leasing or annexing territory and remained content with the

accordance of mere rights of access, grudgingly given and frequently threatened.

In order to satisfy the very natural desire to obtain an equivalent for the large acquisitions which have been made by rival powers, and to possess some outward symbol in recognition of the immense stake which this country has in China, it was last year suggested that, as the centres of British influence are more exclusive on the Yang-tse Kiang than on the coast line, and as the watershed of that remarkable river affords immense opportunities for future commerce which this country is especially fitted to develop, the valley of the Yang-tse should be regarded as the British sphere of influence. The idea was a good one, but, unfortunately, it came too late. In the first place, the fact that the various ports along its banks, which had been opened to foreign trade, had been declared treaty ports, open to all nations alike. In the second, rival powers, more wide awake as to eventualities than ourselves, had taken far-sighted measures to prevent any possibility of the coveted district coming under the influence of this country. Both these dangers had been foreseen by all who had taken the trouble to study the subject, but the British Government had not taken occasion to consider the march of events in China, and, in the most deliberate and literal sense, proceeded to attempt to lock the stable door after Russia had walked off with the horse, and France had purloined the key.

I have dealt at some length with the possibilities of the Yang-tse Valley in a previous chapter. It is only necessary, at this stage, to refer to the political

aspect of the question. After considerable negotiation, the point urged by the British Government was conceded by the Chinese, the undertaking given being that China will not mortgage, lease, or cede to any other Power any territory in the Yang-tse Valley. The outcome of this "concession" is that a Dutch fishing-smack would have equal rights at any of the Yang-tse ports with a British man-of-war, and this country, so far from being justified in regarding the Yang-tse Valley as her own particular sphere of influence, remains the one power in China whose effective control of territory is to be recorded practically in acres. The following table shows the relative amount of trade, and the territory controlled by the four Western Powers in China :—

	Total Trade, 1896.	Territory controlled.
Russian Empire, .	£2,800,000	462,000 sq. miles
France, . .	5,600,000	157,600 ,,
Germany, . .	2,700,000	53,000 ,,
Great Britain, .	39,200,000	200 ,,

In the chapter dealing with the British Record in China I have pointed out how greatly the interests of this country have suffered from the vacillation of the authorities at home and the indecision of our representatives in the East. A further charge to be brought against our rulers is quite as serious in the results it has brought about. In our dealings with the Chinese, we have always exhibited a moderation which has been mistaken for weakness, and a forbearance which has been attributed to fear. The Celestials, like other Oriental nations, are apt to judge their adversaries not by what they are, but by what they

appear to be, and, while the possession of great strength and vast resources does not make much impression on their imagination, the display of even a semblance of force commands their immediate respect. It is for this reason that the insignificance of the territory controlled by this country is regarded as a better criterion

STREET IN HANGHOW.

of our power than is the preponderance of our commerce, and the swashbuckling of Russian agents produces far greater impression at Peking than do the more temperate announcements made from time to time by the representative of Great Britain.

It would be difficult to find two greater extremes of

method than those displayed by the policies of Great Britain and of Russia in China. The two countries are, by force of circumstances, rivals, and therefore natural antagonists. The interests of each conflict with those of the other, and a success on the part of either, involves a corresponding defeat. The reason for this is to be found in the development of the two nations, a development which in the case of Great Britain is the outcome of a natural desire for commercial opportunities, by which to keep pace with her growing population, while in the case of Russia it is due to an artificial craving for territories, which it cannot people, to serve as play-grounds for the military who rule the country. Both nations are Asiatic powers, with a difference which is made evident in the following table, where is shown the extent of Asiatic territory with its population which is ruled by each of the Powers interested in China.

	Territory.	Population.
Russia, . . .	6,564,778 sq. miles	6,564,778
China, . . .	4,218,401 ,,	402,680,000
Great Britain, . .	1,827,234 ,,	291,304,000
France, . . .	315,928 ,,	18,000,000
Japan, . . .	160,000 ,,	43,000,000
Germany, . . .	53,000 ,,	12,000,000

Thus Russia owns the biggest territory with the smallest population in the Continent; but it is not necessary for me to dwell upon the importance of this fact. It is needless to explain that the prosperity of a country depends not on its extent but on its population, and the Russian craze for land grabbing can, in the end, only react on her welfare by exhausting her resources and destroying her credit. But the point to

be considered is not the folly of the Russian aim, but the effect on the other countries interested in China, especially upon Great Britain, which is most nearly interested in the matter and comes into closest contact with the octopus of St Petersburg.

Unfortunately for this country, the foreign policy of Russia is the ablest in the world: the ablest, because the most successful. The reason for this might be found in the fact that, in every particular, Russian methods are at variance with British. Russia's policy is constant, opportunist, and unscrupulous. The end of all diplomacy is undoubtedly the attainment of success, and, in the achievement of this, the Russian agent allows nothing to interfere with his purpose. And the conditions of Russian rule make this certainty of success easy. Apart from the innate ability of her statesmen, they are strengthened in their tasks by a freedom of action unknown in other countries, while, there being no Government to go out and be superseded, no public opinion to be considered, the rulers of Russia are able to devote their whole energies to the attainment of the ends they have in view.

The only form of opinion which finds expression in Russia is that of the military, and this is practically all-powerful throughout the Empire. It is the military party that really rules the nation. It is the military officer who, at his own time and in his own way, annexes territory or claims concessions, which he well knows will be duly recognised by the central Government. It is by individual effort that Russia has grown to her present limits. Her Empire has been doubled

within the past half century, and, with very few exceptions, every addition to her territories has been due to the personal ambition and individual effort of some officer who saw his opportunity and took it. And so by slow yet sure degrees Russia has crept down by way of the Amur, Manchuria, and Kiakhta, until to-day she dominates the country from Peking and dictates to Britain the terms of the contract she may make for the construction of railways in China.

There is no need to recall the sequence of Russia's actions in China. This has been dealt with in the chapter on the Russian Record, but a brief consideration of her most recent achievements will serve to show that in her action Russia has proved herself to be consistently dishonest. There is, of course, nothing remarkably novel in this announcement. The art of barefaced lying has long been a *sine qua non* in Russian diplomacy, and neither Count Muravieff nor M. Pavloff (who will doubtless be duly rewarded for the brilliant success which has attended their efforts to befool the simple-minded British representatives) is exceptional in his abilities in this direction. The methods of Russian diplomatists are constant and unscrupulous, but most decidedly they lack variety. Indeed, one Russian score is very like another, the customary programme commencing with the exchange of pledges, which there is not the slightest intention of observing, and concluding with a soft-spoken denial of such pledges ever having been accorded, after the desired *coup* has been successfully accomplished. The second, perhaps the only other, characteristic of the Muscovite

method is its essential impudence. Russia is (according to Russia) never the aggressor. She does not provoke by the despatch of military expeditions or the mobilisation of battle-ships. She covers her brawny hands with silk gloves and despatches astronomers into the interior of China to take observations of an approaching eclipse—with a sotnia of cossacks to protect them, while the arms and men requisite for the terrorising of the Chinese in Manchuria are conveyed by a "volunteer" fleet, armed up to the gunwale and prepared for any emergency.

The softest spot in the Russian conscience is the point of honour, and this is extremely susceptible. The suggestion that the Hong-kong and Shanghai Bank was about to finance a railway line from Shan hai kuan across the frontier of Manchuria wounded Russian susceptibilities to the quick, and caused such serious damage to her self-esteem that the British Government, notwithstanding their much-vaunted determination to stand firm, trembled before the expressions of Muscovite indignation, and gave in; and so Russia has triumphed in this matter, just as she has done in every other which has cropped up between the two countries.

And while Great Britain has come to a sense of the injury she was about to do to Russia by constructing a British railway within what the latter considers her sphere of influence, Russia is busying herself with the surveying of a route for a line of railway which will pass through the richest part of the territory that has come to be regarded as the British sphere; which, when completed, will bisect the valley of the Yang-tse, and

divert the trade of Hankow from the practical control of British merchants. Of course our Government, acting on the most truly Christian principles, does not deem it necessary to protest against this piece of effrontery. Having had one cheek well slapped on the Manchurian frontier, it turns the other on the Yang-tse Kiang, and affords one of the most ridiculous spectacles in political history: that of a strong and wealthy power worsted at every turn by a weak and all but bankrupt nation; a community of traders ousted by a body of land grabbers. It was not until this scheme was finally arranged that our Government heard of its existence, and, lacking the courage to speak or the energy to act, it has acceded to one of the most preposterous schemes ever designed.

The necessities of this country and those of Russia differ so greatly as to admit of no comparison. In our own case we require an extension of markets for the support of our growing population, and we stand in need of territory to which our children may emigrate. Russia, the most thinly populated of modern countries, so far from requiring extensions of territory for the accommodation of a surplus population, is for want of labour unable to develop her own lands, and could well accommodate additional scores of millions of people without becoming over-populated. The excuse that an increase of territory is requisite for the demands of her trade is ridiculous. Her total trade with China is but a trifle over £4,000,000 annually, and this despite the exceptional facilities she enjoys, possessing as she does a conterminous frontier of some 4000 miles or more,

with direct access to Peking by means of the caravan route *viâ* Kiakhta. Of this sum of £4,000,000 sterling the bulk represents those imports of tea which form the staple trade between the two countries; the total exports from Russia into China are valued under £500,000 annually. The disparity in population is even greater than in trade. The population of England and Wales is 370 persons to the square mile of territory. In China proper the proportion is 292, in British India 184. The number of persons to the square mile throughout the Russian Empire is 13. In Asiatic Russia, including Siberia, the population per square mile is 3, and for Siberia alone it sinks to the striking figure 1. These facts shed a flood of light on Russian methods. Truly they furnish food for thought.

The question for consideration by the Englishman is, however, not the motives which inspire Russian action, but the means which have been employed to prevent the imperilling of British interests, and, if these are examined, the conclusion likely to be arrived at is not calculated to afford much gratification to the inquirer. We have, as a matter of fact, been bested by Russia in every difference which has arisen between the two nations in the Far East. Despite her objection to the integrity of China being threatened by the cession of the Liao-tong peninsula to Japan in 1895, Russia has, notwithstanding our protest, occupied that territory, and after having more than once given pledges as to keeping both Port Arthur and Talienwan open to the ships of the world, she has closed them

to all but her own vessels. In the face of the assistance we have on more than one occasion rendered the Chinese in the direction of training their sailors and organising their fleet, Russia has coolly demanded that the vessels of the Chinese Northern Squadron shall be officered by Russians. She has ousted British capital from Manchuria, brought about the failure of the concession for the Newchang railway extension, and obtained the right to construct a trunk-line of railway through the heart of the country. In addition to these snubs inflicted on Great Britain, she has demanded the withdrawal of Mr Kinder, a British engineer engaged in the management of the Northern railway from Peking to the frontier, and as I write these lines, the news comes to hand that she has objected to the employment of a foreign bodyguard by the King of Korea, who desired to protect himself after narrowly escaping being poisoned by his courtiers. The acute stage in our relations with Russia was reached at the close of last year.

Even at that stage, however, we might have retrieved the past and secured the premier positions in the Far East. Wearied of the constant exactions of her chosen protector, the Chinese cabinet, so recently as the 31st January last, made a final appeal for the support of Great Britain. Replying to Sir Claude MacDonald on the subject of the suggested British loan, the Tsungli Yamen stated that it would be prepared to endorse his views, and co-operate with this country, if the Government would afford protection against Russia, this being the only thing that would

help them. That offer, like those which had preceded it, was declined,—a proof of our being as slow to secure an advantageous position in China as we have always been in obtaining the enforcement of our rights, or compensation for our injuries. No greater contrast is to be found between the policy of England and that of other countries in the Far East than that afforded by the uncertainty and procrastination which invariably attend any assertion of our power. More than a year was permitted to elapse between the brutal murder of Augustus Margary and the signing of the treaty of Chifu, and, when this was obtained, its provisions proved to be ridiculously inadequate to mark the enormity of the deed. Our controlling influence in China, so far as effective power is concerned, is lost to us until such time as we shall have shown by force of arms that we are yet a factor to be reckoned with. We are discredited at Peking by our pusillanimity as much as we are disgraced in Europe by our defeat. Our opportunities have passed away, and we are left to realise at leisure our discomfiture.

From the first chapter in this record of disaster we have been consistent only in our errors. After wasting blood and treasure in the obtaining of treaties for the furtherance of intercourse, we have not successfully imposed the observance of a single one of them upon the recalcitrant Celestial. We have sacrificed our rights and imperilled our reputation, not only by foregoing privileges, but by condoning breaches of faith which have rendered us ridiculous. We have met Celestial chicanery with lack of resource, and Russian

ability with an admission of impotence. And when, all too late, the approaching partition of the Empire is realised, we blandly pin our faith to an impossible catchword, known as the "Open Door." This theory, originating in Exeter Hall and based on the most truly Christian quality of universal charity, is however utterly untenable, and from the standpoint of the political student it is absurd. It is to be doubted whether a more insane proposal was ever laid down by a jaded minister than this suggestion of the "Open Door." Its very idea, signifying the accordance of equal rights to all nations, at all times, or, as it is termed, "equality of opportunity," is opposed to every principle of national policy. It is a theory only possible to a nation, which, like ourselves, is capable of holding its own in the commercial field against all competitors. Such a policy, if the suggestion deserves the title, would, without doubt, be advantageous to ourselves, inasmuch as it would afford us all the advantages of a preferential sphere, without the attendant expense of supervision or protection ; but, to all other countries, the "Open Door" would mean a loss of opportunity for protected trade ; and the Powers, whose only chance of successful competition rests on the imposition of tariffs sufficiently high to keep British manufactures at arm's-length, could never consent to accept a proposal which would be equivalent to making a free gift of valuable future markets to this country. To talk of the "Open Door" as a policy is about as idiotic as to repeat the threadbare dictum that British interests in China are commercial, not political. The one idea

is as impracticable as is the other. And, notwithstanding, the Government cling to their Utopian dream, and, in spite of their every statement being discredited by facts, attempt to justify a copy-book heading.

At the very moment when the British Government was dilating on the beauties of the "Open Door," the partition of the Chinese Empire had been begun. Russia was secretly, but effectively, sending troops into Manchuria. France, refusing to learn from experience the hopelessness of her methods of colonisation, was seeking further extension northwards in the provinces of Yunnan and Kwangsi, and Germany was fully occupied prospecting the metalliferous deposits of Shantung for her own exclusive benefit. Great Britain, possessed of the most authoritative claim to a voice in the matter, alone refrained from taking part in the scramble for territory, and her reiterated cry for the open door found its answer in the projection of a Franco-Russian line of railway across the heart of that sphere which she had always deemed exclusively her own. Driven at last by the indignation of its supporters, as much as by the sneers of its rivals, to attempt something, the British Government hastened to do something wrong, and took Wei Hai Wei, a harbour indefensible by land and exposed towards the sea; and, goaded into a declaration of activity, Lord Salisbury and his lieutenants declared their unalterable intention to do what they had never done,—to protect British interests in China under all circumstances. The immediate answer to this statement has been the

cancelling of the Newchang railway concession, and we stand face to face with Russia in China, defeated in every move, discredited before the world, without a policy, impotent and ridiculous, awaiting a Deus ex Machinâ to extract us from a position which any nation but ourselves would ere now have discovered to be untenable.

And now, while we stand discredited and helpless, there comes the rumour that the Government is attempting to come to an understanding with Russia. Nor is the suggestion singular. There are signs to be read by those skilled in such matters, that there is a growing feeling among the supporters of the Government that we have not done sufficient justice to Muscovite ambition, and that our discomfiture has been brought about by the distrust we have all along manifested of Muscovite faith! I have little doubt but that Lord Salisbury would be willing to close with any offer of a Russian understanding, which did not press too hard on British pretensions in the Far East. Nor do I question the readiness of the ministers of the Czar to accord what is desired. Pledges, undertakings, and treaties with Russia resemble those made by her nearest neighbour in Asia. Such contracts are entered on with the distinct intention of observing them as little as circumstances may allow. An understanding with Russia endures for as long as it is her interest to maintain an appearance of being bound. Her policy is too stable to permit her to be long affected by any concession, while, in the case of China, there is too little stability for a corresponding advantage to be of per-

manent use to the latter. And while we have lost ground on every occasion when we have chanced to stand in Russia's way, we are told that British diplomacy has triumphed, and the newspapers devoted to the inculcation of those principles, so dear to the little England party, lift their voices in joyous unison over the fate of Li Hung Chang, the grand secretary of the Tsungli Yamen. I venture to assert that the chorus of jubilation which has been raised over this interesting event is decidedly premature, as, supposing that the deposition of the grand old man of China is really due to the representations of the British minister at Peking, it remains a foregone conclusion that the chief mandarin will only be ostensibly shelved, and that his influence will remain as great as it has always been. The nominal retirement of Li will, in any case, not have caused him any new sensation. He has already been thrice dismissed, to return to office after a brief interval with increased influence and enhanced reputation. The first occasion was during the Franco-Chinese war, when, on the 11th of April 1884, Prince Chun, the father of the Emperor, effected a *coup d'état* and deposed Prince Kung and the then viceroy of Pechili. Retaining his position of first mandarin and chief secretary, Li continued to remain loyal to the Dowager Empress, and expressed himself in favour of agreeing to the evacuation of Tonkin demanded by the French. This action roused the fury of the war party, which included all mandarindom, and on the bombardment of Fuchow, the foreign secretary was deprived of office and retired into private life at

Tientsin. His opponents soon found that Li was indispensable in any discussion of affairs with foreign nations, and after an absence of just four weeks he was re-appointed viceroy, restored to his various offices, and instructed to take charge of the war, and bring it to as speedy an issue as possible.

The return to power of Prince Kung in 1894 was quickly followed by the dismissal of the viceroy, but six weeks later Li was once more restored in order that he might deal with the rising in Kwangtung, and, excepting for the fine of a year's salary imposed on him for a breach of etiquette towards the Empress on his return from his famous tour round the world in 1896, he has managed to remain in power until a few weeks ago.

The favour in which a high official is held in Peking depends on a variety of circumstances, among which the personal opinion of the Emperor is the least. China is the land of make-believe, and in the personnel of its Government there is just as much deception as among more commonplace persons. The actual rulers of the Empire are the mandarin at Peking, who, by judicious wirepulling, succeed in constraining the Emperor in the direction they desire. It is the majority of the officials who actually control the remainder, but each member of the majority has his own ends to serve and his own little pile to make. The great point of variance among the members of the Tsungli Yamen is the aspect in which the representatives of foreign powers are to be regarded, and it is Li's readiness to deal that has set his colleagues by the ears.

When the dismissal or punishment of a recalcitrant mandarin is demanded by one of the Powers, the speedy fate which overtakes the suspected evil-doer is reversed, and the malefactor invariably goes free. No Chinese official of high rank has ever been really punished or disgraced on the initiative of a European power. While every mandarin connected in any way with the negotiation or signature of the treaty of Nanking was degraded and dismissed, no case is on record of the infliction of a penalty for either the breaking of treaties or the ill-treatment of foreigners. Neither were the officials responsible in the case of the Chinkiang riots, the Wuhu rising, or the anti-foreign agitation which excited the whole country in 1891, brought to justice. The murder of Mr Margary was proved to have been encouraged if not actually instigated by Tsen Yuying, the futai of Manwyne, and after a great deal of discussion the British commissioners charged with the inquiry obtained a promise from Li Hung Chang that this man should be suspended and tried. But he was not suspended, nor was he even arrested, and to this day he has gone scot free.

In the case of the Liao-tong outrage on missionaries, a number of officials were sentenced to be degraded from their posts. They were removed and promptly appointed to more lucrative berths in another province, while the same course has been pursued in every case, even to that of the governor of Shantung, whose degradation was demanded by the Germans on account of the murder of two missionaries which had

taken place within his jurisdiction. The degradation was carried out to the extent of withdrawing the official, who was promptly found an equally good appointment elsewhere.

In the face of the experience afforded by these instances of Chinese politics—and it would be easy to quote many more—it is surely wise not to be carried away by the idea that, even if Li Hung Chang owes his dismissal to the representations of the British minister at Peking, the event is likely to bring about any remarkable change of front towards this country by the wire-pulling rulers of China. So long as Li is of use at Peking, so long will he be retained, and the fact that of all the mandarin he is the one most thoroughly versed in Western politics and Western ways of thought, makes him indispensable whenever diplomatic action has to be taken. If his dismissal be really due to the efforts of Sir Claude MacDonald, then the announcement is worth just the paper it is written on, for the reason that the Tsungli Yamen will never actually throw over their greatest source of strength at the bidding of a foreign minister. If, on the other hand, Li's downfall is due either to political scheming among his fellows, or the displeasure of the Emperor, the event may safely be regarded as an incident in the life of the grand secretary, another *entr'acte*, which will speedily end in his reinstatement with added distinctions.

And while we flatter ourselves that our diplomacy has at last achieved something, we learn that Russia is busily engaged in extending her influence on the

Yang-tse by despatching more cossacks to Hankow, and establishing a line of steamers to compete with the British vessels, which have hitherto practically monopolised the traffic on the great highway. Well may the British residents at Shanghai and elsewhere express their uneasiness as to coming developments, nor can one reasonably complain of the terms of irritation in which these exiled Britons express their opinion of the incompetence of the Government, whose first duty in the Far East should be to guard the paramount interests of this country.

While Russian aggression has been making hay of our pretensions in North and Central China, French insistence has been threatening our existence in the South. Our irresponsible neighbours across the channel, noting that the attention of the British Government was concentrated on the Gulf of Pechili, have secured for themselves a series of concessions, which, while they will not serve to teach the *fonctionnaires* how to develop the natural resources of their colonies, will undoubtedly do much to damage the opportunities for an extension of trade by this country. Besides the right to construct the railways to Nanning, Talifu, and Pakhoi, and the granting of a joint interest in the central trunk-line already described, France has secured an undertaking as to the non-alienation of the provinces of Kwangtung and Kwang-si which form the backland of Hong-kong, and will be enabled to hinder British trade in South China by a refusal to accord equal facilities with herself, and the imposition of prohibitive rates. Of the various railways

proposed and authorised in China, only two are in British hands, and it is noteworthy that in the case of Russia, France, and Germany alike it is expressly stipulated that the material for the construction of the undertakings shall be provided by the country interested. This fact will result not only in the loss of a considerable amount of trade to this country, but also in the construction of a series of roads, which will, judging by the Trans-Siberian line, be neither durable nor safe.

Any estimate of the relative strength of the positions occupied by foreign powers in China must be guided by the facilities for concentration possessed by each, and, in this respect, France and Germany are alike so severely handicapped as to be practically ineffective. The relative strength of a foreign nation in the Far East depends neither on the intentions nor on the capacity of that power. The possibilities of each are limited by the supplies available on the spot, the facility with which reinforcements are obtainable, and the opportunities for maintaining communications with home. In these respects both France and Germany are practically at the mercy of Great Britain, for the reason that neither possesses coaling stations of its own, and the passage of its ships between Europe and the Far East is dependent on the permission of this country for the use of its depots. Great Britain possesses supplies of coal, distributed at short intervals, all over the world. On the route from England to China, there are no fewer than seven coaling stations, viz., Gibraltar, Malta, Aden, Bombay, Colombo, Singa-

pore, and Hong-kong, while somewhat outside the direct route are Kurrachee, Trincomalee, and Calcutta. So long as these ports are open to French and German ships, so long can these nations maintain their communications with China. But, in the event of trouble occurring, British ports would at once be closed and the means of coaling would be withdrawn. France has a substitute in Pondicherry, which might serve, however inadequately, to replace British ports, but Germany is without resource if once our assistance be denied. Russia, while at present at the mercy of this country for her supply of coal between the Black Sea and Port Arthur, will be practically independent as soon as the Trans-Manchurian Railway is completed, and is, therefore, in a better position than either of her *confrères*. But there are other considerations which discount her position in the Far East, the chief of these being the enormous cost of maintaining her bases on the Pacific. The gigantic expenditure which has been necessitated by the policy recently followed by Russia in China, has already told on her resources to a degree not generally suspected, and it is quite possible that, ere long, developments will become manifest, which will surprise those who regard Russia as a power possessing boundless wealth.

In the face of these considerations, the question arises, What should be the policy of Great Britain in China? How can she best consolidate her interests throughout the Celestial Empire? What methods are most requisite in order to secure the position she has attained in the trade and development of the country? Five years

ago it would have been an easy matter to answer this question. But recent events have very much complicated the position, and narrowed the courses open. In days gone by the possibilities were limited only by the wishes of Great Britain backed with the force she was able to employ. To-day it is not a question of what China will give, but what other Powers will permit her to offer, and the respect evinced by Her Majesty's Government for other Powers is very great!

On one point all those who have studied the Far Eastern Question are agreed. Britain must cast to the winds her party cry of the open door. Neglected in practice, as it has been this past month or more, it must be openly and finally discarded, and in its place an active policy of interference must be adopted. I put it thus plainly since the occasion is not one which will allow of any more *façons de parler*. England must assert herself, and in reply to the cession of territories to other nations, define the limits of the sphere of influence she elects to take to herself. It is scarcely necessary to point out of what the sphere of Great Britain should consist. There is not much choice, and the valley of the Yang-tse Kiang is the only part of China which is both suitable and available. But its limits are ill-defined, and until this is remedied the mere claiming of the valley as a sphere would be but the acquisition of a name. The whole of the watershed of the Yang-tse, then, with the province of Yunnan down to the Burmese frontier, must be pledged to Great Britain, and, in order to secure the great

river in case of need, at least three places must be leased on or near its banks to serve as bases for the gunboats which will protect our rights if necessary, and prevent the interference of foreign powers. This proposal will, I have no doubt, be attacked as being opposed to our policy in China, and altogether too strong a measure to be acted on. I reply that any measure likely to permanently benefit this country in China must involve a change in our policy, while it is only strong measures that can serve us in the Far East. What Russia has done in the North, Germany in the North-East, and France in the South, we must do in the centre, unless we are prepared to see our last chance slip from out our grasp, and find ourselves politely bowed out of China by the Powers which are quietly but surely annexing the country.

But this is by no means all that is necessary to restore our lost prestige. Russia, stable in her policy and immovable in her determination, has not yet achieved the objects of her ambition in the Celestial Empire. She has, indeed, only begun, and it is our mission to stay her hand. It matters not where the line be drawn, but a line must be laid down, and beyond it she must not go. Pledges, treaties, and promises are alike useless. Muscovite exploiters will continue to forge their way ahead until their progress is impeded by an obstacle they cannot surmount,—a nation as strong as their own.

If Russia's advance in China is not to be on the same lines of continuous expansion as has been the case in Central Asia, then that nation must be Great

Britain, which must stay her march by means of a conterminous frontier beyond which she must not pass. The frontier may be a political or a physical one. It might be drawn along the line of the barrier of stakes, long since disappeared, which once delineated the boundaries of Manchuria and the province of Chili. It might be the Pei Ho, or, if that be insufficient, there is the Yellow River, in itself a formidable frontier; but some definite limit must be laid down, to pass beyond which will be regarded as an act of war. Let Britain guarantee to China the territory beyond that line, just as Belgium is guaranteed in Europe, and, for some years at least, Russia's hands will be tied and her descent on Eastern Asia stayed. If this be not done, then, within another score of years, Russia will have reached the borders of Burma, just as she has attained those of Afghanistan, and then, by the seizure of Tibet, she will command the whole of the Indian frontier and stand monarch of Asia and ruler of the world.

But what of the Chinese? How are the wily Celestials to be dealt with while Britain is protecting herself from the Muscovite descent? The problem is complicated, but not insolvable. The Government at Peking must be purged; the numerous conspirators disposed of, and, most important of all, our representatives must take a more prominent part in the work of the country. Owing to the absurd seclusion in which the nominal ruler of the country is maintained, it is absolutely impossible to confer with him, or even to learn his views, presuming, that is, he is allowed to hold

any. If our minister at Peking were able to meet the "son of heaven" just as the ministers of foreign countries are permitted to meet our Queen, an immense gain would most surely result, and much of the scheming which now goes on among the mandarin would be impossible. Moreover, besides our minister at Peking, we ought to have an accredited resident at each of the chief provincial capitals where viceroys are placed, who should, by mixing freely with the local authorities, not only gain much valuable knowledge of the interior, but be able gradually to accustom the governors to Western ideas, and to overcome the prejudice which still occasionally leads to attacks on foreigners.

Now is the time to take action—or never. China is, in all probability, on the eve of a fateful epoch in her history. A crisis is approaching in her affairs, and a variety of causes contribute to introduce a new order of things. The Emperor, a young and irresponsible being, is in the hands of an able and unscrupulous woman, who is generally understood to know far more about the early demise of his predecessor than has been publicly stated. The ministers at Peking are a selfish and corrupt lot of men, the more capable being the more corrupt. Li Hung Chang, at one time within an ace of becoming the nominal as well as the actual ruler of the land, is hand and glove with the Dowager Empress, and capable of anything likely to enhance his personal reputation or his power. In addition to these factors in the possibilities of change, there is revolution active in the south and smouldering in the west, and, as if

the dangers from within were not sufficient to stir the Empire to its extremely antiquated and very rotten foundations, Russia is threatening to absorb the country from her vantage ground in the north, and only seeking her opportunity to take Peking and declare a protectorate over the whole country.

For all these reasons I repeat that if Great Britain desires to save China she must act promptly. It is futile to take shelter in the default of precedent. Lord Salisbury's refusal to find capital for the construction of railways in China has cost us the loss of the Luhan line. His shortsightedness in refusing to accord the necessary protection to British capital has provided Russia's opportunity in the Yang-tse Valley, and his truly marvellous lack of information has been responsible for the squabble over the Newchang railway concession, in which we have been as usual defeated.

If we are to maintain our trade in China, we must turn over a new leaf, and take a lesson from the conduct of nations wiser than ourselves. Half measures are useless. Firmness, enterprise, and ability are necessary to protect our interests and to stay the hands of our despoilers. Money must be spent; but it will be well invested, and produce a handsome return. The Yang-tse Valley and the whole of Yunnan must be reserved to Great Britain, and, if a precedent be demanded for such a sweeping change of front, then let our rulers ponder over Egypt, and inquire how much money was sunk in the purchase of the Suez Canal shares, money invested in a foreign country

without guarantee, a practice which, according to Lord Salisbury, is contrary to all precedent.

And if we continue to trust to luck and that wonderful friendly understanding with Russia, which rejoices at intervals the heart of the little England party, without ever becoming an accomplished fact, then most surely shall we lose, just as the full return is coming within reach, what it has taken us nearly three centuries to acquire. With our opportunities lost, our sphere of control usurped by other Powers, and our assistance and advice rejected scornfully, we may retire from China, victims of foreign ability and of our own weakness, and seek fresh markets elsewhere.

CHAPTER XV.

THE FUTURE OF CHINA.

It would need a man bolder than I to forecast the probable future of the Chinese Empire. The problems affecting the fate of the country are so intricate, and the conflicting interests at work so varied, as to make the Chinese puzzle one, which might with justice be termed inscrutable. There are, however, certain possibilities which might at any moment supervene, which would effect a marked change in the existing position, and I propose in this, my last chapter, to glance at these, and endeavour to evolve from out the number of conflicting suggestions, a line of reasoning which may perchance result in actual development.

There are two causes at work, either of which might at any moment bring about an entire change in the affairs of China. They are the seething revolution always smouldering within, and the conflicting aims of rival powers without. The former is the more serious of the two, and the more likely to effect a sudden and a radical change in the fortunes of the country,—a change which could not well be for the worse, and which might very possibly be for the better.

Photo by] [*Russell & Sons.*

LI HUNG CHANG.

Every political question in China is viewed from one of two aspects: the view of the conservative or that of the progressive Chinaman. For, remarkable though it may appear, there is a progressive party in China, consisting mainly of the merchants and others who have been brought into contact with Europeans. The proportion of progressives among the governing classes is extremely small, but some there are who exhibit a marked desire to introduce foreign ideas into the Chinese arena. Notable among such are Chang-Chi-Tung, viceroy of the two Hu provinces, Cheng Bo Cheng, governor of Honan, men who have benefited by a Western education, and are honestly desirous of doing their country good. The number of these among the mandarin is, however, extremely few, and it is to be feared that any attempt to implant their ideas on the majority would result in their destruction at the hands of their less patriotic fellows. But trouble may ensue at a moment's notice in China by the death of the Emperor, which might be effected without the delay of a lengthy illness. It is no unusual occurrence for a Chinese notability to "pass away" quietly and unexpectedly, all that transpires being a few bulletins and a final announcement of demise. This is all that is known of the end of Tungchi, the predecessor of the present Emperor, of Ahluta, his young wife, who died shortly after him, and of the Dowager Empress Tsi Thsi, his aunt, who ascended to Heaven in 1881, leaving Tsi An, the former concubine of Hienfung [the present Dowager Empress], regent over the land. It is this person who has so recently

acquired the strings of Government as a protest to the liberal character of the edicts lately issued by Kwangsu, and it would not be a matter for great surprise if that youthful ruler were to meet with an accident, or develop heart disease, as a ready means of enabling the Dowager Empress to continue her rule unhampered.

In the event of such a catastrophe, the right of appointing an heir to the Celestial Throne would rest in Tsi An, who would probably nominate the infant grandson of the lately deceased Prince Kung, such an appointment having the advantage of necessitating a continued regency. Should this happen, the event would open up a number of possibilities. Li Hung Chang, despite his age, retains his vigour, and is said to be as keen as ever to attain self-glorification. It has more than once been suggested that he has cast longing eyes on the dragon throne, and this rumour is borne out by some of the documents left by General Gordon, who knew Li intimately, and reckoned him up in no complimentary terms. In any case, the least display of weakness on the part of the ruler of China would be very likely to bring about a revolution which would have for its object the ousting of the "usurping dynasty" of the Manchus and the reintroduction of a line of Chinese Emperors. That Li Hung Chang could have filled the post in years gone by is undeniable, and it is highly probable that he would have received a fairly general support; but how far his truckling to the Russians has affected his status in China is a question on which I am not qualified to give an opinion.

The ultimate fate of China, whatever internal dissensions may arise, will, however, be decided, not by the scheming of officials, but by the action of the Powers which she has kept knocking at her gates for so long. It is Great Britain and Russia who hold the destinies of China in their hands, and nothing that the people can do will affect the result.

If left to her own devices, Russia would inevitably absorb the middle kingdom down to the Burmese frontier, while the western provinces of Kansu and Sechuan would form a valuable addition to her Central Asian territory. But Russia, while by no means hopeless in the future, realises that in the present it would be, to say the least, unwise to take steps which would mean war with us, and so she refrains from doing more than render it impossible for Britain to obtain the entire control of the Yang-tse Valley by forming a Russian colony at Hankow.

But it would be folly to close one's eyes to the fact that Russia means to absorb China, and that the achievement of her desire is only postponed in order that she may effect her purpose by instalments and thus render her success all the more secure. This view is, I am aware, opposed to that held by many of our politicians, including members of the Government, but it is nevertheless correct, and its correctness must be admitted by all who are not so fatuous as to have been impressed by the recently issued homily of the Czar. To put it plainly, China is doomed to become absorbed by a foreign power. The only question to be decided is, whether that power shall be Russia or

another? or, presuming that at the ninth hour the British Government comes to face the facts and realises the position, whether, as an alternative, a scheme of partition into zones be agreed on, and the country be divided between the Powers which are established in the Far East.

To believe in the recuperative power of China is mere waste faith. The people are too ignorant, the rulers too obtuse to lift themselves to the level of Western civilisation; and even were this not so, the inevitable jealousies certain to ensue between the Powers interested in the opening up of the country, would serve to bring about a disruption of territory which would render the continuance of the Empire, as a whole, impossible.

There is nothing in common between the situation in China to-day and that which existed in Japan thirty years ago. The races are entirely apart in characteristics as in physique, and what has been feasible in Niphon could never come to pass in Chrisé. China as a political entity is doomed. Diplomatically she has been dead these three years, and to-day she carries out the order of the strongest of those by whom she is surrounded. The only chance of rebuilding the Empire sunk so low, has been neglected by Britain, which alone of all the Powers held the key to the position and refused to use it. A judicious interference at the close of the Japanese war in 1895 would have sufficed not only to save China, but to obtain a footing in the country under circumstances which will never recur. The independence of the Empire could have been

guaranteed by the Powers; indeed, Great Britain was the only one which refrained from responding to the suggestion of Russia to oppose the cession of territory pledged by the treaty of Shimonoseki.

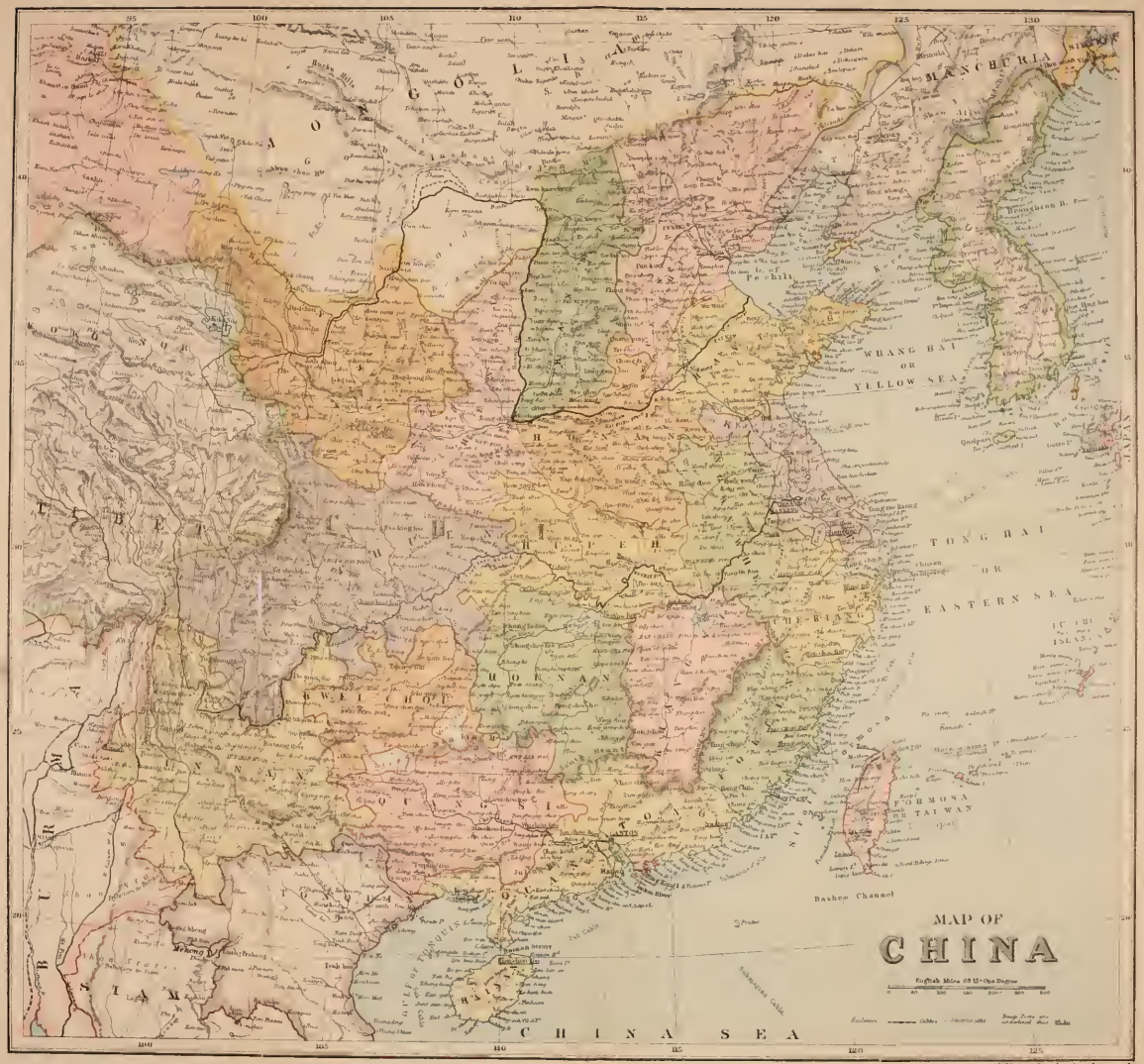
The opportunity was lost, and to-day we see the country at the mercy of Russia, with her conterminous frontiers on two sides of the Empire, elated at the success of her recent tactics, and determined to continue her incursions at all costs, excepting war.

For to-day Russia dare not fight in China, and a display of force would promptly cause her to hold her hand. But it will not always be so; and in a few years' time, with her railways built, and her communications completed, Russia will be in a different position. And then, after having neglected our opportunities, and permitted her to gain strength under our very nose, then we shall have to fight Russia at the cost of blood and treasure, which a little foresight, backed with energy and decision, might have saved.

And afterwards! What will be the share of China in the world's history, when split up into segments? She who has held half of Asia as a suzerain power shall have become resolved into a series of dependencies. What is the future in store for the four hundred millions of people who to-day offer the finest opening for trade with the West that has ever been known?

The question is an absorbing one, and suggests material for study which may well startle the student. What will happen when this people, able, energetic, imitative, and industrious, learns to follow the example

set by Western nations, and takes to manufacturing goods, and raising produce at a cost which, while it will pay them, would not find a Western labourer in bread? How, when China supplies the world with manufactures at a tithe the cost of their production in Western countries? What will become of our Chinese trade when the Celestial supplies his own requirements, and undersells his teacher in his own markets? For, whatever the fate of China, the people will remain with their marvellous resource and adaptability, and they only need the education and the training we are endeavouring to give them in order to hold their own against the world. The problem is fraught with possibilities which make one pause and ponder, and feel grateful for the reminiscence that, after all, the *dénouement* is not likely to crop up in our time.



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APPENDIX A.

Landmarks in Chinese History chronologically arranged.

B.C.

2637 First cycle in Chinese history begins.
2205 Feudal period begins.
1767 Feudal period ends.
221 Tsin Chi Havangti assumes title of Emperor.
211 Great Wall of China completed.
202 The Han dynasty.

A.D.

265 The second Tsin dynasty.
420 Nanking becomes the capital.
618 The Tang dynasty.
1225 The Sung dynasty.
1260 The Yuen (Mongol) dynasty.
Capital transferred to Peking.
1368 The Ming dynasty.
1516 Portuguese reach Canton.
1536 Macao granted to the Portuguese.
1567 Two Cossacks visit Peking.
1616 Manchus descend on Chinese.
1634 Captain Weddell blockades Canton.
1644 The Tatsing or Ching (Manchu) dynasty—Chuntche Emperor.
1653 Russian Envoy refused audience at Peking.
1660 Tea first brought to England.
1661 Kanghi, 2nd Manchu Emperor.
1664 Dutch mission to Peking.
1669 Portuguese mission to Peking.

1680 East India Company begins to trade.
1689 Treaty of Nerchinsk signed with Russia.
1692 Ides (Russian) mission to Peking.
1720 Chinese conquest of Tibet.
Papal mission to Peking.
1722 Yung Ching, 3rd Manchu Emperor.
1735 Keen Lung, 4th Manchu Emperor.
1793 Lord Macartney's mission to Peking.
1795 Dutch East India Company's mission to Peking.
1796 Kiaking, 5th Manchu Emperor.
1816 Lord Amherst's embassy to Peking.
1821 Taoukwang, 6th Manchu Emperor.
1834 East India Company's Charter expires.
Lord Napier arrives at Macao.
Opium prohibited.
1839 Lin seizes opium.
British trade with China ceases.
Hong-kong occupied by British.
1840 Edict against intercourse with England.
Captain Elliot enters Pei Ho.
1841 Sir H. Gough captures Canton and Amoy.
Hong-kong ceded to British.
Ningpo and Chusan taken.
1842 Woosung and Shanghai taken.
Treaty of Nanking signed, Hong-kong ceded.
1850 Taeping Rebellion breaks out.
1851 Hieufung, 7th Manchu Emperor.
1854 Imperial Maritime Customs established.
1856 Lorcha *Arrow* seized, Canton attacked.
1857 Lord Elgin arrives at Hong-kong.
1858 Canton taken by English and French.
Pei Ho forts taken.
Treaty of Aigun signed with Russia.
Treaty of Tientsin signed with Great Britain.
1859 Mr Bruce stopped at Pei Ho forts.
Commercial treaty with America.
1860 Lord Elgin and Baron Gros reach Shanghai.
Capture of Peking and destruction of Emperor's summer palace.
Convention of Peking signed.

1861 Tsungli Yamen established.
British and French embassies established at Peking.
Admiral Hope explores Yang-tse Kiang.
French seize Annam.
Tungche declared 8th Manchu Emperor, aged 5.
Dowager Empresses appointed Regents.
Russian treaty signed.
1862 Rebels seize Ningpo and Hangchow and march against Shanghai.
English and French assist Chinese against Taepings.
1863 Major Gordon leads army against rebels.
1865 Nienfei rebellion.
1866 Chinese Commissioners visit Europe.
Yakoob Kahn conquers Kashgar.
1868 Attack on Yangchow Mission by literati.
Burlinghame treaty signed at Washington.
1869 Supplementary convention to Tientsin treaty signed.
1870 Mohammedan rebellion in North-West China.
Massacre of French consul, priests and sisters of mercy—22 persons—at Tientsin.
1871 Chung How (Chinese envoy) arrives in London.
Russia occupies Kuldja.
1873 First audience granted to foreign ministers by Tungche.
Talifu captured by Mohammedans.
1875 Kwangsu declared 9th Manchu Emperor, 4th February.
Dowager Empresses continue regency.
Murder of Augustus Margary, at Manwyne, 21st February.
Edict permitting intercourse with foreign ministers published.
1876 Shanghai Woosung railway opened.
Chefoo convention signed.
1877 Decree giving equal rights to Chinese Christians published.
Woosung railway purchased by Chinese.
Quo ta Zahn accredited first minister to London.
Yakoob Kahn totally defeated in Turkistan.
1878 Chinese minister gives first reception in London.
Destruction of mission house at Wushishan.
Woosung railway removed to Formosa.
Rebellion in Kwangsi.
1879 Rebellion in Hainan.

1879 Marquis Tseng arrives in London.
Treaty of Ili signed with Russia.
1880 Chung How imprisoned for signing treaty.
1883 Difficulties with France over Tonkin.
Sir Harry Parkes appointed minister at Peking.
1884 *Coup d'état* by Prince Chung.
Treaty with France.
Keelung bombarded by French.
Admiral Courbet arrives at Fuchow.
French ambassador leaves Peking.
Admiral Courbet sails up Min River, destroying fleet.
Kelung taken.
Tamsui defeated.
French protectorate of Tonkin and Annam recognised.
1885 Death of Sir Harry Parkes.
Peace signed with France.
Sir Robert Hart succeeds Sir Harry Parkes.
1886 Sir John Walsham succeeds Sir Robert Hart.
Burmese frontier convention signed at Peking.
1887 Emperor Kwangsu assumes the government, aged 16, 7th February.
Overflow of Yellow River.
1888 Tientsin-Taku railway opened.
1889 Great famine.
Riots at Chinkiang.
Marriage of Emperor, 25th February.
Yellow River bursts its banks, great inundations.
Insurrection in Fukien.
Rising in North Manchuria.
1890 Imperial decree on reform published.
Chungking convention signed.
Death of the Marquis Tseng.
Floods in Chi-li.
Massacre of Christians at Jongtuytsin.
Decree granting audience to representatives of foreign powers.
1891 First audience takes place, 5th March.
Death of Prince Chung reported.
Anti-European riots at Wuhu.
Decree ordering protection of foreigners published.

1891 Yang-tse floods.
American mission destroyed at Ichang.
Insurrection in Mongolia against native Christians.
1892 Mr Nicholas R. O'Connor appointed minister at Peking.
Renewed outrages on missionaries reported.
Yellow River inundations.
Mr O'Connor arrives at Peking and is received by the Emperor.
1893 Famine in Shensi.
Kung Chao-quan appointed minister in London.
1894 Insurrection in Manchuria.
Japanese troops occupy Seoul.
Korea renounces suzerainty of China.
Kowshing sunk by Japanese.
Chinese declare war on Japan, 4th August.
Chinese defeated at Ping Yang, 16th September.
Outrage on missionaries at Liao Yang.
Battle of the Yalu, 17th September.
Imperial edict for the protection of foreigners.
Japanese forces enter Manchuria, 25th October.
Kinchou and Talienwan taken, 7th November.
Port Arthur taken, 21st November.
Massacre of Chinese at Port Arthur, 23rd to 26th November.
Rebellion at Wuhu.
1895 Independence of Korea proclaimed, 7th January.
Wei Hai Wei taken, 12th February.
Newchang taken, 6th March.
Rebellion in Kwangtung.
Pescadores islands taken.
Treaty of Shimonoseki signed, 17th April.
Russia, France, and Germany protest against cession of Liao-tong peninsula, 23rd April.
Japanese abandon claim to same, 6th May.
Rising against missionaries at Chengtu.
French frontier treaty signed.
Massacre of missionaries at Whasang, by vegetarians, 1st August.
Missionaries attacked at Fatshan, 7th August.
Edict ordering construction of Peking-Tientsin railway.
1896 Imperial national post established, 27th March.
Sir Claude MacDonald minister at Peking, 24th April.

1896 Li Hung Chang attends coronation of Czar at Moscow, and afterwards goes round the world.
Trans-Manchurian railway agreement signed, 4th October.
1897 Opening of West River to foreign trade agreed to.
Lu Han central railway conceded to Belgian syndicate.
Germany demands satisfaction for murder of two missionaries.
Germany occupies Kiaochau, 14th November.
Russia occupies Port Arthur, 18th December.
1898 Kiaochau leased to Germany, 10th January.
Monopoly for development of resources of Shantung and construction of railways accorded to Germany, 26th February.
Russia obtains lease of Port Arthur and Talienwan on same terms as Kiaochau was leased to Germany, 7th March.
Russia obtains concession for railways in Liao-tong Peninsula.
German consul claims whole of Shantung province as sphere of German influence, 13th March.
Loan of sixteen millions sterling concluded with Great Britain and Germany.
Occupation of Wei Hai Wei by British, May.
Concessions to Anglo-Italian Syndicate for development of resources of territory in Shansi and Honan, accorded 21st June.
Imperial Edict ordering establishment of University and Patent Office on European lines, 6th July.
Russia opposes Newchang railway concession, 8th July.
Rising of Black Flags in Kwangsi, 10th July.
Li Hung Chang dismissed from Tsungli Yamen, 8th September.
Edict according right of memorialising throne, etc., 18th September.
Dowager Empress Tsi An assumes control of Government, 22nd September.
Emperor supposed to have been put to death.
Empress issues rescript withdrawing Emperor's Edicts, 27th September.
Kang Yu Wei, the reformer, escapes from Peking, and reaches Hong-kong on British vessel, 30th September.
Chang Yeu Huan, Chinese envoy at the Queen's Jubilee (1897), dismissed from office and banished to Ili, 30th September.

1898 British, German and Russian Governments order military escorts to Peking to protect embassies in case of need, 4th October.

Parties of Marines and Cossacks detained at Tientsin on their way to Peking by the Mandarin, 5th October.

Tsungli Yamen assent to foreign guards entering Peking. They reach the capital by special train conveying 25 British marines, 30 German marines, and 63 Russian soldiers and sailors, 7th October.

Final contract for the Shan hai kuan Railway Loan, signed by the Mandarin Hu and the Hong-kong and Shanghai Bank, 10th October.

Reactionary edicts, reverting to the old order of things, issued in the name of the Dowager Empress, 10th October.

Edict issued suppressing all Chinese Newspapers and Clubs, 13th October.

Dr Detheve of the French Legation at Peking permitted to visit the Emperor Kwangsu at the Palace, and examine as to his state of health. He reports that the Emperor is unwell, but not in any danger, 19th October.

Rising threatened against the British in the newly acquired territory behind Kauloon, 20th October.

APPENDIX B.

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